

This Old House

59
little ways to
save \$\$\$
at home

Small Upgrades, Big Impact

vintage fixtures
warm finishes
easy trimwork

More
Ideas,
New
Look!

All
about...
**DIY
wood
floors**
page 100

JANUARY | FEBRUARY 2009
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02>

**3 stylish
projects**
**SIMPLE
WAINSCOTING**
**BOLD PAINT
DESIGNS**
**CLASSIC WOOD
HEADBOARD**



Memo to Advertisers

FROM THE DESK OF
John L. Brown
President



During tough times we're all forced to rethink the way we do business. When the economy begins to show signs of trouble, *This Old House* committed to a comprehensive study of the home marketplace. We wanted to better understand consumers and what they desire from magazines, websites and television shows like ours.

We surveyed thousands of self-described home-improvement junkies. We met with hundreds of people who imagine a remodel or plan a makeover or pick up a hammer each weekend. They told us what advice they want from us, what kinds of products and services they want from you and, most encouragingly, they told us that they're moving forward with their projects despite turbulent times. For these people—some 17 million of them—home improvement is a way of life. These Americans don't just dream—they're Dream Achievers.

We believe that understanding what motivates these Dream Achievers has never been more critical. In fact, we've redesigned the magazine you hold in your hands based on their needs. And I'm guessing you'll find their opinions just as helpful as we at *TODH* have. If you haven't seen the full report yet, give us a call. It's filled with insights and game-changing strategies to grow your business, no matter the economy.

Meanwhile, I hope you enjoy the newly remodeled *This Old House*. It comes with my thanks for your continued support and best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year.

Cheers,

WHY SANITIZING HAS NEVER BEEN MORE IMPORTANT

Dream Achievers
represent just 31% of home-improvement
media enthusiasts, but account for
61% of all spending
in the category.

2009 Calendar



POWELL

	Main Edit Features	Special Ad Sections*	Ad Close	On Sale
Jan/Feb	The Smart Spend Issue All About Handwood Floors	*****	11/30/08	12/29/08
March	Small Space Solutions Great Garage Makeovers	The Old House Homes Collection by Bensonwood**	1/5/09	2/23/09
April	The Landscaping Issue Color	*****	2/2/09	3/23/09
May	Outdoor Living Worner's DIY	NNDA Design Solutions	3/9/09	4/27/09
June	Your Old House Save This Old House	*****	4/6/09	5/25/09
July/Aug	The Kitchen & Bath Issue Best Old House Neighborhoods	*****	5/11/09	6/29/09
September	Annual Fall Upkeep Issue Build a Better Block Awards	*****	6/29/09	8/13/09
October	Earth Friendly Upgrades Black & Blue Thumb Awards	Super Energy-Saving Sweepstakes	8/3/09	9/21/09
November	The Before and After Issue Home Tech Innovation Awards	*****	8/31/09	10/19/09
December	Secret Sources Holiday Gift Guide	*****	10/5/09	11/23/09

Note: Editor is subject to change. *Specialized sections close one week prior to regular issue close. **TODH Homes Collection website closes 11/23/08.



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THERE'S A CRAFTSMAN IN ALL OF US



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SHOPPING

Glass adds class to your turn style with patterned, clear, and colored doorknobs.



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FROM
BIFOLD TO
HEADBOARDS



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A one-of-a-kind tablecloth with a unique design for old to test. Shows in brown paper and is made of a durable material. It's a great way to display your collection of antique doorknobs.

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Heating Classic Homes the Modern Way



Gas and oil heat can be expensive, noisy and smelly. And installing conventional air duct systems in old houses often requires carving up closets and walls at great expense and disruption. There's no easier, more efficient way

Today, more owners of older homes are discovering the benefits of ductless mini-split air systems. And Fujitsu's Halcyon systems are state of the art.

Like conventional HVAC systems, the Fujitsu Halcyon system locates the compressor and condenser outside the house. But Halcyon systems eliminate the need for a basement- or attic-located evaporator unit and bulky ductwork by using thin copper tubing that pumps refrigerant directly to inconspicuous wall-mounted blowers inside. Even more remarkable, this same unit works in reverse in winter, absorbing heat from the outside air and moving it indoors to heat your home. The result? Efficient cooling and heating for year-round, whole-house comfort in most climates.

Available in numerous mix-and-match capacities and configurations, there's a Halcyon mini-split system for even the most difficult to heat and cool areas.

Halcyon



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- ☒ You want to reduce allergens and manage room temperature
- ☒ \$20,000 quotes for central air give you sticker shock
- ☒ You'd like to lower your utility bill up to 50%
- ☒ You want a system that switches from heating to cooling automatically
- ☒ You're tired of paying to cool or heat rooms you don't use

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FUJITSU

letter {from This Old House}

Remodeling success...at last!

"I feel so foolish," a colleague said to me. She hadn't replaced the water supply pipes in her bathroom when she gained it for a new job, and now, some time later, the pipes were leaking. They leaked okay at the time, and like all of us, she was looking to save a bit of money where she could. "I won't have a bathroom for a week, and it's going to end up costing twice as much as it should have!"

"But it's not foolish!" I said. "At least not as big a deal as I am. My remodel has taken two years, is 200 percent over budget, and I've not even started the water supply pipes!"

"Okay," she said, "you're the bigger fool!"

Yes, well, so big a fool, in fact, that one remodel wasn't enough. I started another, fortunately this time with any coworkers at *This Old House*—on *This Old House* magazine. And with their help, it's coming out much better. The editors, as in any good remodel, first started by gathering ideas and opinions from others. They looked for inspiration. They even got a building permit of sorts from you.

Throughout last year we surveyed thousands of you, not with hundreds, and had better to learn with dozens. You told us what you liked about TOH, what you didn't, and what you want to see more of in your favorite magazine.

Your desires became our blueprint. And as we added on to the cost-and-holds of the job, *This Old House* section. We built to meet our customers' overall project, one suitable for home improvement with a range of skills. And we returned the whole thing with a lifetime of tips, tricks, and advice guaranteed to make you a savvy, more confident home improver.

We like how things have shaped up and hope you do too. E-mail me at scott@thisoldhouse.com to tell us what you think.

P.S. Almost forgot. We want to give you a prize of \$10,000 in our second annual Reader Remodel Contest. Go to thisoldhouse.com/pourTOH for details. And while you're there, take a minute to tell us your own stories of home improvement, your tips and tricks, and what you'd like to see most in *TOH*. Your best ideas will fill our June 2009 100-percent reader-made contest issue.

Scott Greenlee
SCOTT GREENLEE
EDITOR



MONEY-SAVING FACTS I LEARNED FROM THIS ISSUE OF TOH

1. A tub's claw feet can work wonders on your bathtub! (p. 20)
2. A bedroom dresser is a great place for plumbing! (p. 64)
3. A woman's clothing store can be a great source for well-priced vintage-look decor! (p. 41)



You could still buy slippers as a fashion statement.

Uponor radiant floor heating provides a nice, even heat that takes the chill out of winter floors. Unlike forced air, it reaches every corner of the house and eliminates cold, drafty rooms. What's more, it offers significant energy savings. Warm, cozy, efficient and reliable. You'll wonder why anyone would ever wear slippers. To find out more, call 800-321-4729 or visit www.uponor-usa.com

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{ January/February 09 } checklist

EASY WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR HOME RIGHT NOW

Give a DIY gift

Never need roses. This Valentine's Day let The Old House help you surprise your sweetie by finishing a project that's been lingering on your honey-do list. Customize and print your own Honey-Do Coupons at thisoldhouse.com/boxes



Clear some shelf space

January is No Tinsel Get Organized Month. Yep, we're growing too, but instead of trying to tackle the whole house, here's a task that takes just a few minutes: Get rid of flaking, rusty cans of paint. Primer and other household chemicals and cleaners. And don't pour anything down the drain—contact your local sanitation department to learn how to dispose of these responsibly. For more quick and easy organizing tips, go to thisoldhouse.com/boxes

Clean bird feeders

Who knew that cold, wet weather can cause birdseed to spoil? Help our feathered friends by emptying feeders by simply rinsing them with a solution of 3 parts bleach to 9 parts water. Then rinse, dry, and refill—and watch the hungry flock return.



Look into permits When making your New Year's resolutions include something like "Ride the bull with all the kitchen" or "Build that backyard deck we've always wanted." Since renovations like those require permits, take advantage of the slow construction season to file the paperwork—the bureaucrat will help you with no schedule. Just don't decide which project to take on! Go to thisoldhouse.com and click on "Planning & Ideas" for inspiration.

Order heirloom tomato plants

All our friends in the sunny 'blic agree: Heirloom tomatoes are better than a bathhouse in Hawaii. They sell out long before they ship, so imagine, so if your heart is set on, say, Black Princess or Green Zebra—two popular varieties—order today so that you can look forward to those scrumptious summer salads.



Get power tools at discount

If Santa didn't treat you to a new circular saw or lightweight drill/driver, treat yourself! Stores are slashing prices now to get rid of excess inventory and make way for new models. For more thrifty home-improvement tips, check out "50 Ways to Save Up to \$500" on page 86.



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Your houseguests or your meter reader.



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45
million

Number of houses in the U.S. that lack adequate insulation



INSULATION

A step toward cheaper LEDs

At Purdue University researchers have found a way to make light emitting diodes (LEDs) using silicon instead of costly gallium, paving the way for reduced consumer prices for LEDs as high as 10 percent a year for the next five years. The efficient little devices last nearly 50 times as long as incandescent bulbs while using as little as 10 percent of the energy, but to date their only fortune has come at a high cost. A 60-watt LED bulb could pay you back as much as \$90 today.

NEWSFLASH → In Bayonet Point, Florida, Joseph Prudenius was sent to jail recently for growing a request from his home state's insurance to remediate the property's roof.



Take the trolley

When AGC of MA, a union looking for a better way to do business, found that it was too expensive to build a new trolley car, it decided to build a trolley car that would be used as a trolley car. The trolley car was built by a trolley car company that was a trolley car company. The trolley car was built by a trolley car company that was a trolley car company.



SAFETY

Heating stoves are cause for concern

Shipments of pellet and wood stoves are up more than 200 percent this season, manufacturers say, which has Greg Gernell, assistant fire marshal for the state of Missouri, feeling itchy under the collar. "We've investigated many fires caused by stoves that weren't installed right," he says. "Two tips for avoiding trouble: Never hook up a stove to a chimney flue, and make sure the stove is installed correctly." (See the manual and local codes for details.)



ADVICE

→ In most states, it's illegal for insurers to refuse to "cancel" a policy if the policyholder is a "high-risk" driver. But in some states, insurers can refuse to "cancel" a policy if the policyholder is a "high-risk" driver. In some states, insurers can refuse to "cancel" a policy if the policyholder is a "high-risk" driver.

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Book
rooms see
boom

Though we spend less time reading for pleasure than we did 30 years ago, we still want a dedicated place to do it: The National Association of Home Builders says 63 percent of home owners have a library created one — a 5 percent jump from 2000.



2,000 lbs

Average amount of snow you'll get every 10 minutes while shoveling a driveway



67%

Increase in the number of parents who moved in with their adult children from 2000 to 2007



Fed extends energy credits

The bailout plan passed by Congress last October prolonged the tax breaks for tax credits for homeowners who invest in solar panels, geothermal energy or wind turbines. The new law extends the tax credit through December 31, 2015, to claim them. Rebates for energy-efficient appliances and water heaters were also put in place until the end of 2009. Visit energy.gov for more details.

NEW
TOOL

A 15-amp motor that maintains 85 speed no matter what you're slicing through makes Bosch's *Demolition/Resurfacing Saw* one less, mean cutting machine. \$189, boschusa.com

Home News reporting by
Kath Pandolf and Monica Rydzewski

NEWSFLASH → In an attempt to get homeowners to clean up their acts, the city of Nashville has broadcast names and addresses of houses with **unsightly yards** and **overgrown grass** on its local public TV station.



WILL CLINTON
Food talk



EMMY CAST:
Going south.



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Thank you Dukes.
Thank you ER.
Thank you Hilary.
Thank you Monica.
Thank you Paris.
Thank you Britney.
Thank you Lindsay.
Thank you Jacki.
Thank you fat people.
Thank you skinny people.
Thank you short people.
Thank you tall people.
Thank you uptight women.
Thank you shallow men.
Thank you bald guys.
Thank you bad drivers.
Thank you procrastiators.
Thank you nines.
Thank you pro wrestling.
Thank you people with realists.
Thank you boy bands.
Thank you spandex.
Thank you right-wing conservatives.
Thank you left-wing radicals.
Thank you beauty pageant contestants.
Thank you bad actors from the 70s.
Thank you overzealous gym teachers.
Thank you motivational speakers.
Thank you free huggers.
Thank you Francis.
Thank you cross-dressers.
Thank you nerds, geeks, and other socially inept people.
Thank you guys with big biceps and small brains.
Thank you women with big...hair.
Thank you famous people with slight speech impediments.
Thank you everyone who ever inspired a joke that made an entire country laugh.
Without you, we wouldn't be able to bring you this.

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LAUGH**
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Be more



PBS

A six-part series exploring a whole century of comedy.

WEDNESDAYS 8PM ET/PT STARTS JANUARY 14

pbs.org/makeemlaugh

home solutions

Edited by Deborah Sussman

inside

10 USES

FIREPLACE FIX

STRIP A CHAIR

MORE



4 SMART IDEAS

Sideboard radiator cover

In a dining room, a buffet or server comes in mighty handy—if you have room for one, that is. Here, a radiator might have hogged the empty space. Instead, it's boxed out with a functional-style cover, complete with bead molding, dovetail flared with special latches for storing silverware and metal screening that lets heat escape. But the best feature, hands down, is a marble top that keeps pie at the perfect serving temperature...much like the oval-lipped leather radiators of yore. That's a lot more than my old serving station can do.



**make this
you sell**
For instructions on
building a unique
radiator cover, visit
www.houzz.com
/radiator

Vinegar

Forget about salad dressing. This inexpensive kitchen staple—the distilled white kind, that is—can multitask in any room of the house. —JENNIFER ST. JAMES



1 Peel off wallpaper.

Using a sponge or spray bottle, saturate wallpaper with a solution of equal parts vinegar and water. Let stand for several minutes, then start scraping. The paper should come off easily.

2 Revive old paintbrushes.

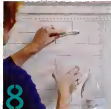
Soak junked up nylon brushes in hot soapy water for up to 30 minutes to remove paint, and soften the bristles. Afterward wash them in hot soapy water, brushing off paint as needed, then rinse and let dry—good as new.

3 Test your soil's pH.

Place a handful of dirt into a small container and sprinkle vinegar on it. It'll fix 'em. The soils alkaline, adjust the pH with an acid mineral meal.

Remove mineral deposits from showerheads.

4 Pour 1/2 cup of warm vinegar into a resealable plastic bag. Drop in the sheethead, making sure the holes are submerged, and seal the bag. Let sit for 1 hour. Rinse and wipe clean, then snuff back.



5

† Keep paint from peeling.

Before painting galvanized metal or concrete, wipe down the object or surface with vinegar, using a sponge or lint-free cloth. This little trick will help your paint job last longer.

6 Banish decals and stickers.

Deliverage onto stubborn, uncooperative stickers affixed to glass, plastic or wood. Scrape the surface clean, then rub the area with more

vi)garlic to remove any sticky residue

7 Wipe off wax or polish buildup.

On wood surfaces or furniture, use a mix of equal parts vinegar and water to remove buildup, wiping with the grain of the wood. For tougher furniture, make weaker solution—2 parts water to 1 part vinegar—and rub the material in a circular motion.

8

† Within event.

For stubborn stains scrub gROUT with a stiff-bristled toothbrush dipped in vinegar. Watch it whiten before your eyes.

irritation. If you handle them often, use your hands with a mixture of 1 part vinegar to 2 parts water before washing up—the acid neutralizes their alkaline content.

● Dissolve rust.

9 Soak old tools and carvings in vinegar for a few days. Rinse them with water and watch rust and scale disappear.

10 Protect your hands.

Crustic ingredients in concrete drywall, and other building materials can cause dermatitis.



Because life gets ready in the bathroom.

When you walk into a bathroom created with the help of **NKBA Professionals**, you'll wonder if you're still dreaming.

After washing the sleep away with a milkshaking shower, you'll quickly realize that your dream is a reality. Between getting up for work and getting the kids prepared for school, we get ready in the bathroom. Members of the National Teachers & Staff Association remember and they worked to ensure that their efforts set the stage for a great day. So while the bathroom of your dreams, work with the finest professionals in the teacher and staff industry.

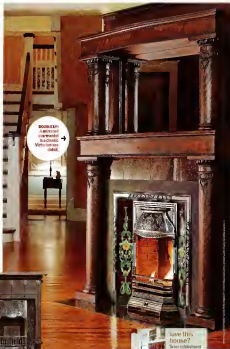


4 RETROFIT

Rekindle an old flame

Using clay tile to reinforce old chimneys so that you can safely enjoy those nightly blazes will set you back a few thousand bucks. At the least, a Victorian-era cast-iron gas stove—vented via a steel tube placed in the chimney and finished with tiled side panels—arrives as an aesthetically fitting and economical way to keep the fire burning. The best-kind firebox is made from heat-reflective ceramic that radiates warmth into the room instead of up the stack, keeping you even cozier. Another bonus: No more urban-creepers! While installing an insert is a job's job (find one at recofirst.org), enjoying the results is all yours. —MICHAEL DOCKHORN

BOULEVARD
A modern
cast-iron
gas stove
with tiled
side panels



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Everything you need to strip a chair

This Old House studios love to help homeowners salvage assets that have hidden potential. Case in point: We bought this rained-leg chair as a tag sale for \$30, knowing a looter lurked beneath the crusty mass of paint. Removing them is a simple task for beginners and experts alike. We applied a good chemical stripper, worked until it penetrated the finish, then used a few basic tools and a little elbow grease to unearth the bare wood. If your old kitchen chair could use an overhaul, here's what you need for the job.

—SALVAGE



safety gear

Working with a chemical stripper requires more protection than just a long-sleeved shirt. (1) Splash-proof plastic safety glasses, \$6; home depot.com (2) PVC rubber gloves, \$7; lowes.com (3) Coated rubber apron, \$45; scienceworks.com



stripper

Products with methylene chloride work best but must be used outdoors or in a well-ventilated area. NMP-based strippers won't let you strip old paint around indoor furniture very well, give a natural finish touch to apply it. (1) Freedom's Day Gel (NMP), \$20; home depot.com (2) GreenGloss Furniture Stripper (acetone-chlorine), \$55; onlinepaints.com



SCRAPERS

Flat and angled tools help you get paint slugs out of every nook and cranny. (1) Plastic scraper, \$2; hardware stores (2) Putty scrapers, \$2 to \$5 each; home depot.com (3) Bent scraper, \$45; www.furniture.com (4) Bent tools, \$10 to \$4; www.furniture.com



safe stripping
To strip paint safely, use the right tools and wear your safety gear.

abrasives
After scraping, rub a nylon scouring pad over the entire surface. Then clean with a brush, using light and angled strokes with a soft bristle brush or a sanding block. (1) Sanding block, \$5; hardware stores.com (2) Bristle brush, \$3; hardware stores.com (3) Scotch-Brite pad, \$3 for 2; hardware stores



CREATIVE REUSE

Tub-feet bookends

With a little imagination, you can turn old tub feet into a useful bookend. The feet are made of a heavy-duty plastic that's easy to work with. A little glue and a few minutes of work will turn them into a useful bookend. To protect the feet from the sun, you can use a clear coat of varnish. Then you can use them to hold your books in place. —KARL HOFFMAN



4 QUICK FIX

Thaw a frozen pipe

Can't pinpoint the trouble spot? Try this trick while you wait for the plumber: First, run a damp rag along exposed pipes, especially those in unheated areas or near exterior walls, which are the likely culprits. When you see frost appear, begin—there's your ice plug. Thaw it out slowly using a hair dryer set on heat. —NICKI KOSZARSKI



+ ENERGY SAVINGS

Drape away drafts

Even after you've weatherstripped and caulked doors, windows in older homes can still be drafty. Here's another line of defense against the chilly winter weather. The right shades, curtains, and even blinds will help retain some portion of the estimated 30 to 35 percent of heat loss through windows in winter time. Follow our pointers to keep drafts from messing up your comfort zone.

—BOB LANGRISH



hang tight Mounting shades or blinds inside your window casings is the best way to minimize drafts. If you have to mount them outside, make sure they cover the ends and top to trap as much cold air as possible.

mind the gap

Inside-mounted window treatments should be installed closer to back from the windowpane. And they should fit snugly—just shy of leaving a half inch of the opening.



go cellular

Homeowners can choose to install shades, curtains or even window treatments. Think with more cells trap more air, but they're also more expensive, so they're less likely.



more energy savings

Using this energy saver will help you save money on your energy bills. It's a great idea for those who are looking to save money.

dress in layers

Curtains, shades, and window treatments can help you save money on your energy bills. They can also help you save money on your energy bills.

homeowner tip

CHINA WOOD WORKS: WIL

"Add to this clever tip to a hammer's wooden handle to make it less slippery."

SHARE YOUR TIP

Post them at thisoldhouse.com/tips



+ CLICK LIST

Specialty lightbulbs



Track down typical scenes in home videos or DVDs to a map. Finding pin-pointed locations of these scenes is a lot easier than finding a map. It's a lot easier than finding a map.

for appliance bulbs

A Bulb Wizard and if you haven't replaced that bulb in microwave bulbs since it burned out 12 Super Bowls ago. The Bulb Wizard, which stocks hundreds of appliance bulbs, will help you eliminate those chicken wings again.

for vintage-style bulbs

A Home Depot can be a reliable go-to source for reproductions, including vintage-style bulbs with custom finishes and golden-white, ornate, painted finishes.

for LEDs

• Corbin.com: No matter which fixture you're replacing, you'll find a good lamp with accurate—plus an extra to have the right LED bulb for the job.

This Old House
THE NEW YORK CITY PROJECT

Join us for the renovation of a Brooklyn Renaissance Revival rowhouse and meet our newest cast member—designer Carole Freshaud

Exclusively on **TBS** Presented by **Wanda**

THANKS TO OUR NATIONAL SPONSORS

AMERICAN **GMC** **Wanda**

PHOTOS: JAMES HAMILTON/GETTY IMAGES; BULB WIZARD; CORBIN.COM; WANDA





"I procrastinate...she fixes, toilet explodes...help!"

Our husband-and-wife team of remodeling therapists offers tried-and-true advice for surviving the emotional and financial pitfalls of home improvement

C My wife had been after me to replace a running toilet, but my procrastination kept the best of her and she decided to fix it herself. That's when her gentle nagging turned into panicked calls for help. I found her standing over the toilet, trying to stop a geyser with her hands.

"Stop the water off! Have you lost your mind?" I blurted, as I turned the valve. She responded, "If you had fixed this, this never would've happened." As we cleaned up, the house was colder than winter in her's love.

—CINDY/STEW GROS CITY OHIO

D Dear Project Procrastinator: You've got to lead a horse to water. We learned to laugh at ourselves the night it snowed in our dining room—after we had decided it was okay to leave the opened soot/uncovered during a snowstorm. Such lapses in judgment made you must begin to realize that to move ahead is ongoing, sleek off, and you'll never be slinking with a side.

Our advice to your wife: Don't forget the power of a threat. If there's delays, breakle your toilet. I don't a not enough, get in episode how again. Now, Dennis, if you don't twenty your

wife attempting man repairs, you must stop on top of your duties. Maybe even ask your wife to assist you so that she can learn. The together time might help your marriage, not just your house.

C "My family excites me!"

To keep vents clean during our renovation, I'm doing a lot of the work myself. I put in 10 hours of my day job, run to our rental apartment for a quick bite, then kiss my wife and 1-year-old son before heading to the house for several more hours. I also spend my weekends there. I'm trying to do right by my family, but I feel guilty for not being around. Is there a way to make the most of my time for what I'm doing? —TODD/STEW GROS CITY OHIO

D Dear Quinn Riddle: Dad. Family time is worth more than a few extra bucks in your pocket. Before we start any project, we figure out how much of a drain it'll be on our relationship. If the schedule seems like it'll have us leaving our house, we'll extend the deadline so that it includes weekends to relax and regroup. We've also hired a pro to work alongside us to speed things up. Too expensive, you say? Try what our friends did and finish part of the house now in another contract with the family there. These falls out the entire house but first set up the garage as a temporary apartment. Include the money paid over on rent.

C "Our neighbors are noisy!"

My husband and I just moved into an apartment building, and we're having problems with our neighbors. We hear



them talking and laughing. It's all so loud. We're new to the area and we're not used to it. We're not sure if we should move or if we should just live with it. We're not sure if we should move or if we should just live with it.



Also, engineered wood floor styles

All About Engineered Wood Floors

It's a clear winner for solid wood—faster to install and less prone to moisture damage. Our experts help you decide which high-tech, low-fuss boards are best for your application and style.

PHOTO: JEFFREY M. HARRIS FOR THIS OLD HOUSE

Print Close



NEW ENGINEERED FLOORING

Take a close look at the wood floor in the photo on the right. A close eye might convince that this oak exposure is made up of solid strips of old oak, one of the most popular American hardwoods. That eye would be wrong, mostly. Sure, it's oak on top, but that's just a wood veneer skin. Underneath are seven thin wood layers, all glued together to make a plywood sandwich called engineered flooring.

Since their invention in the 1960s, engineered wood floors have improved in appearance and performance, accounting for 30 percent of all the wood flooring sold in America today. Available in dozens of wood species, and with new surface finishes, such as hand-scraped, for a distressed patina, these high-tech boards are sold just right in big storage houses, whether it's a 10,000-square-foot or a 700-square-foot.

Most boards come with a factory finish that's built on top of one applied in your home on solid wood, and they're ready to fasten the day you get them down. Engineered boards are also problem solvers, allowing you to use them where solid strips often can't go, like in basements or directly over concrete slabs. Even better, budget-minded homeowners can lay the boards themselves, saving a bundle on pro installation and getting great-looking results in a weekend.

VITALS

Is it right for you?

By elimination of wood species and surface treatments. Suitable for basements where solid wood often isn't.

DIY-friendly installation; most boards come prefinished.

What's it cost?

About 20 percent more than refinished solid boards. And you mow that cost and then some on installation, staining, and sealing. Figure \$3 to \$14 per square foot.

Does it hold up?

Warranties on the floor range from 10 to 30 years, with "lifetime" warranties. That means one or two days per household, not 100. Most companies provide lifetime warranties against certain deterioration.

How to care for it?

Map with a microfiber cloth and wood floor cleaner to remove the dust that scratches the finish and streaks the floor's life. **WHERE TO INSTALL IT**

Engineered flooring goes anywhere you'd get solid wood—and same place you couldn't.

In Basements

The moisture that gathers here wrecks havoc on solid wood flooring. Because the bottom layers used for engineered boards or concrete like plywood, the wood's natural tendency to expand and contract in humid areas is reduced. The board's decorative profile also helps where the moisture is at a premium.

Over Radiant Heat

Thin things fit through systems, starting as low as 1/8 inch, allows you to choose transitions between different types of flooring at doorways and elsewhere that would be impossible with standard 1 1/2-inch solid flooring. You can also lay engineered flooring over any flat, stable surface, including concrete, tile, steel vinyl and existing wood floors.

Over Radiant Heat

Thinner engineered boards laminate best better than thick solid wood and we mean stable. Floating floors are best because they don't need staples or nails that might

penetrate wires or hot-water tubes. Check with the radiant system's manufacturer before using a floor underlayment, which interferes with heat flow.

What's Not to Use It

While engineered flooring handles swings to moisture better than solid flooring, it has limitations. The wet floor, slope, and major leaks of a busy bathroom stand with them from a shower, and even stable engineered boards at risk. The same floor might lose staining color. **WHAT TO LOOK FOR**

Good, better, best

Engineered flooring runs the gamut from the low end, starting at \$0 per square foot, to the high, at \$14 and more. To judge quality, check the thickness of the "face layer" or top skin of wood, the number of veneers in the core, and the number of finish coats—all of which affect price and warranty. Typically, the more layers, the better. Below, we list the three common classes of engineered boards sold up.

Good

Good 3-ply construction: 1/2-inch face layer, 1/8-inch core, 1/2 to 1/3 inch veneer. It's thick, thick. About \$3.50 per sq ft. Options limited to common species, such as oak or ash, and just a few stains.

Better

Better 3-ply, 3/4-inch face layer, 7/16-inch core, 1/8 to 1/4-inch veneer. It's thick, thick. About \$4.50 per sq ft. More options, such as cherry, birch, and some exotic, all stains and a few surface effects, such as distressing.

Best

Best 7-14-ply or more. Seven-ply we have layers, which can be sanded two or more times. It's thick, thick. 25-year-plus warranty. Still to 1/8-inch thick. About \$10.50 per sq ft. Wide selection of species, distressed options, and more surface treatments, such as hand-scraped and wire-brushed.

Why Hardness Matters

The harder the top layer, the more resistant it is to dents and the longer it'll hang in like new looks. But hardness isn't the only factor to consider. Denser woods with less grain like maple, whose fibers grow more tightly than a slightly softer oak with a looser grain, like red oak. And floors with little or no grain are better at hiding scratches and wear. The blue-tinted sample compares the hardness of popular wood species.

The Competition

We sort the difference between engineered, laminate, and solid boards.

Laminate

Laminate, it may look real, but that's actually a photo of wood grain standing on. A paper image is embedded in resin, glued to fiberboard, and coated with a protective film. A surface mimicking natural wood's texture. Laminate flooring is sturdy as thick as engineered, so you can lay it over existing floors, and once a laminate's top real wears away, it's lost; it can't be refinished.

Solid Wood

Solid boards interlock with a tongue on one edge and a groove on the other. Engrave the boards, sand and stain as much as you want, be finished in a half-hour and can be laid directly over concrete. No engineered and laminate. It is, such that solid strips can be refinished up to 10 times, compared with three for the best engineered and none for laminate. **FOUR WAYS TO GO**

Engineered flooring can be finished or glued down, or better, float, relying on its mass to hold it together. Use this guide to choose the best method that's best for you.

1. **Glue it together.** Apply a bead of glue to the tongue of each board and tap it into place with a block. The floor floats, unattached to the subfloor except by force of gravity.

2. **Fasten it down.** Rent a floor stapler and compressor (about \$40 per day) and rapidly secure the boards to the existing floor without having to wipe up any glue.

3. **Glue it down.** Lay the boards in a bed of adhesive, so you seal it. This approach works particularly well over sand concrete, where you can't nail staples.

4. **Click and lock.** This flooring floats, loosely mated tongues and grooves that lock together without glue or fasteners. It's the simplest, most convenient installation method.

Can engineered boards be refinished?

Yes, they can, at least once. If floors with a wear layer less than 2 millimeters thick can tolerate a light sanding with a buffer. Thicker top layers can be sanded just like solid wood, allowing you to remove deeper scratches and dents. An engineered floor with a 3-millimeter top, for instance, can handle two refinishing. Just be sure your flooring pro knows your floor's species and refinishing history before he begins.

Cost calculator

To factor how much a new engineered wood floor will set you back, find measure the room's square footage. Add 10 percent for sub and waste, then multiply by the board's square-foot price. Don't forget to look in a few solid boards for door thresholds, which are sold separately.

everything they do. When they wake up at 3:30 a.m., we wake up too. We talked to the family, nicely, but that didn't work. —JULIE NEWYEN, 6/11

4 **Dear Sleepless in the City:** Stop playing nice! Most buildings require that the majority of floors be carpeted to deaden the sound of footsteps. If yours does not cut your neighbor's floor to the manager if they don't work, soundproof your living by adding insulation between the joists and then installing a drop-down "acoustic" ceiling. We did that under one of our tennis-flavored napkins with good results. Can't expose the joists? Cover the ceiling with sound-deadening fabric. A stylish alternative to acoustic tiles.

5 **"I need patience...to measure twice and cut once."** My front porch needed some new trim. So I measured once and cut the boards. They were too long, so I cut them down with a miter saw. Now they're too short. So what do I do? I screw everything together, seal the gaps, and guess it's perfect, even though it's not. (I mean I should have summoned Great Patience and started anew. But how?)

—HUB SCHWARTZ, SALT LAKE CITY

6 **Dear Rubbed/Renewed:** This tool is helpful, but what you really need is a plan. Working without one is like flying a plane without checking with ground control. During the rush to finish our kitchen, our contractor left an outlet exposed behind the sink, a potential electrical fire up that lucky feed only our nerves. Always wrap up your plan on paper and manually check off the steps you complete. This will prevent you from skipping ahead and doing a shoddy job.

help us help you

These independent contractors you out-grow your relationship. It's not help. It's maintenance and labor and possibly other possible problems.

PRODUCTS

5 problem-solvers for less than \$6

1 Wrangle a stack of materials

WHAT IT IS A felt-feeding reusable ribbon "tape" (think one-sided Velcro).

WHY YOU NEED IT Discover the best way to secure a stack of materials without sticking to the surface—right and again. ScotchBundling Wrap. scotch.com



2 Cut power to appliances

WHAT IT IS A single-plug adapter with an on-off switch.

WHY YOU NEED IT Remove your toaster oven's standby heat. Use a vintage waffle iron. A demo browser. Your desktop. A flat-screen. A flat-screen. A flat-screen.



4

Unstick a vacuum seal

WHAT IT IS A built-in switch you can install on your package to help it pop open.

WHY YOU NEED IT Because you're a full-time bag out of the box. It shouldn't be such a struggle. Vacuum Seals. vacuumseals.com

3 Steady a table

WHAT IT IS A set of adjustable feet that can raise furniture 1/2 inch to 1 1/2 inches.

WHY YOU NEED IT Because the stack of materials you're not staying put. End of the world. Your table is wobbly. Leaking. This. scotch.com



5

Organize small stuff

WHAT IT IS A carabiner-style hook that screws on to a bottle cap.

WHY YOU NEED IT Because you're a full-time bag out of the box. It shouldn't be such a struggle. Carabiner Hooks. carabinerhooks.com



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SIERRA

WE STARED FUEL EFFICIENCY IN THE EYE.
FUEL EFFICIENCY BLINKED.



When it comes to gas mileage, the Sierra XFE is tough to beat. With unsurpassed fuel economy compared to any other V8 truck* and up to 34-40 highway miles per tank, the Sierra XFE goes longer than you ever thought possible without hitting an eye. It's the Sierra XFE, from GMC. Engineering that happens when you never say never. **WE ARE PROFESSIONAL GRADE.**

*EPA est. mpg: 21 city/31 hwy. Based on 2007 data. Figures represent. Excludes all but 2007 models. ©2006 General Motors Corp. All rights reserved. GM Corp. 2006-2007. 2006-2007. 2006-2007. 2006-2007.



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Modern flow, major savings

Removing a wall and adding period touches transformed the kitchen in this 1850s cottage—and sweat equity saved them big bucks. BY KELLY MAGNAN • Photograph by JACK TISDALE



There's no more time appealing than a bright, open kitchen that invites family and friends to gather round. So after Tracy Stephens Shaffer and her husband, Doug, gutted the awkward cooking space in their 1850 cottage in Boston Heights, Leveeview, they wanted to connect the kitchen to its adjacent family room, using a peninsula with stool seating on one side to delineate the two. The open-plan configuration would also keep the floors on the crowd-pleasing 1950s Chambers done that inspired the owner's Vintage style.

Fortunately, the couple was willing to take on most of the work themselves, with plenty of help from Tracy's dad—who salvaged the original beam-gum floor and built the Shaker-style cabinets. Since equity-freezing funds in the couple's \$15,000 budget for new wiring, plumbing, and gas lines, as well as a \$2,000 overhead of the old stove. With one wall down, two dining rooms became one cheery family room kitchen with a separate table for playing games and doing crafts with their young daughter, Sara. The new space, together with the main anteroom they created in an entry alcove, boosts the history of the home and functions much more efficiently, says Doug. "Which is another way of saying that they asked the paint to look and just the family-friendly upgrade they needed, too."

before+after:
kitchen



Before The old kitchen had a maddening array of cabinets and not magnetic colors. With one wall gone, period cabinets provide just enough storage. To keep the look open and airy, they went painted white above and painted below.



after

Clear fixed prep and cooking areas are established within the space now open to the family room.

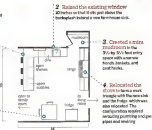
before

The existing 103 square-foot kitchen was walled off from the family room and had a makeshift layout with almost no counter space.



1. Removed the wall between the kitchen and family room, eliminating two door swings and built a perimeter with cabinet storage for pattern on one side and outdoor for cookbooks on the other.

5. Added a table and chairs for a breakfast area that doubles as an additional prep area.



2. Relined the existing window with new glass and added a new farmhouse sink.

3. Created a new entry room in the 10' x 10' 3\"/>

4. Relocated the stove to a new work triangle with the new sink and the fridge, which was also relocated. The configuration required relocating plumbing and gas pipes and venting.

Determined to quit?
This could be your year.

2009



Talk to your doctor about Chantix® (varenicline).

Chantix offers a 2 part approach.



1. Prescription Chantix is a non-nicotine pill that prevents nicotine from reaching key receptors in the brain.
2. In addition to your doctor's help, behavioral support programs are important. Reach out for our GETQUIT® support program. It's just a call or click away.

Studies show 44% were able to quit at the end of 12 weeks on Chantix (vs. 18% on placebo). It can effectively reduce the urge to smoke.

CHANTIX is one treatment option you and your doctor can consider.

Important Safety Information:

Some patients have reported changes in behavior, agitation, depressed mood, suicidal thoughts or actions while taking CHANTIX or after stopping CHANTIX. If either you, your family or caregiver notice agitation, sleep-wake mood, or changes in behavior that are not typical for you, or if you develop suicidal thoughts or actions, stop taking CHANTIX and call your doctor right away. Also tell your doctor about any history of depression or other mental health problems before taking CHANTIX, as these symptoms may worsen while taking CHANTIX.

The most common side effects are nausea, sleep problems, constipation, gas and vomiting. If you have side effects that bother you or don't go away, tell your doctor.

Pregnant or planning to become pregnant? Use caution driving or operating machinery until you know how quitting smoking with CHANTIX may affect you.

CHANTIX is for adults 18 and over and should not be taken with other quit-smoking medicines. You may need a lower dose of CHANTIX if you have kidney problems or get the flu. Before starting CHANTIX, tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or if you take insulin, sodium medicines or blood thinners. Medicines like these may work differently when you quit smoking. Should you stop or quit smoking, keep trying to quit.

Ask your doctor if Chantix is right for you. Log on to chantix.com or call 1-888-CHANTIX(243-6889).

Please see patient summary of Important Facts about Chantix on the next page.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.



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IMPORTANT FACTS

CHANTIX
(varenicline) tablets

(Cham-tix)

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

Some patients have reported changes in behavior, aggression, depressed mood, suicidal thoughts, or serious when attempting to quit smoking while taking CHANTIX or after stopping CHANTIX. If either you, your family or caregiver notice agitation, depressed mood, or changes in behavior that are not typical for you, or if you develop suicidal thoughts or notions, stop taking CHANTIX and call your doctor right away.

ABOUT QUITTING SMOKING

Quitting smoking is hard for most people because:

- Nicotine is a powerful chemical physical addiction.
- Some psychological and emotional triggers can make you want to smoke.

Talk to your doctor about ways to help you quit smoking, including counseling and support programs.

ABOUT CHANTIX

- CHANTIX is a prescription medicine to help adults 18 and over stop smoking.
- CHANTIX has not been studied with other stop smoking treatments.
- In studies, it reduced the urge to smoke.
- Quitting smoking can lower your chances of having lung disease, heart disease, or getting certain types of cancer that are related to smoking.

BEFORE YOU START USING CHANTIX

Tell your doctor about all your medical conditions.

Tell your doctor if you:

- Have ever had depression or other mental health problems.
- Have kidney problems or get kidney dialysis. You may be prescribed a lower dose of CHANTIX.
- Have any allergies.
- Are pregnant or plan to get pregnant. CHANTIX has not been studied in pregnant women. It is not known if CHANTIX can hurt your unborn baby. It is best to stop smoking before you get pregnant.
- Are breast feeding. Although not studied, CHANTIX may pass through breast milk. Talk with your doctor about the best way to feed your baby.

Tell your doctor about all your medicines. Include over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal products. Be sure to tell your doctor if you take:

- insulin or insulin medicine
- blood thinners

Medicines like these may work differently when you quit smoking.

If you should not use CHANTIX while using other treatments to quit smoking.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF CHANTIX

• Some problems have had now or worse mental health problems.

The most common side effects of CHANTIX are:

- nausea
- sleep problems (trouble sleeping or vivid, unusual or strange dreams)
- constipation
- gas
- vomiting

Tell your doctor if side effects bother you or do not go away. There are other side effects of CHANTIX. Ask your doctor for a more complete list.

WHAT SHOULD YOU AVOID WHILE TAKING CHANTIX?

Use caution driving or operating machinery until you know how quitting smoking with CHANTIX may affect you.

HOW SHOULD YOU TAKE CHANTIX?

- Take CHANTIX exactly as prescribed by your doctor.
- Choose a quit date to stop smoking.
- Start CHANTIX 1 week (7 days) before your quit date.
 - We can smoke until your quit date.
 - Stop smoking by your quit date.
- Take CHANTIX after eating. Take CHANTIX with a full glass (8 ounces) of water.
- Take CHANTIX for up to 12 weeks.
- If you have completely quit smoking by 12 weeks, your doctor may prescribe another 12 weeks of CHANTIX to help you stay quit.
- If you stop up and smoke, you can keep taking CHANTIX. Some people need a few weeks for CHANTIX to work best.

CHANTIX comes as a white tablet (0.5 mg) and a blue tablet (1 mg).

- Take the white tablet the first 7 days (first week).
- Take the blue tablet for the rest of the treatment.

Days 1 to 7	white tablet	Take 1 tablet each day
Days 4 to 7	white tablet	Take 1 in the morning AND 1 in the evening
Days 8 to end	blue tablet	Take 1 in the morning AND 1 in the evening

- This dosing schedule may not be right for everyone. Your doctor may reduce your dose if you have nausea, stomach problems, or sleep problems.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

This is only a summary of important information. Ask your doctor or pharmacist for complete product information, or:

- Go to www.CHANTIX.com or
- Call 1-877-CHANTIX (877-242-6849).

Unlabeled Use: Help people quit smoking? Please see program that can help. Call 1-800-368-4400 or visit www.FoodAndDrugs.com.

helpful answers

the key details

• The birch plywood cabinets and detailed vent hood canopy were built and painted by Mike Tracy a father. The countertops are GreenGlaze's durable, moisture proof, and the hardware details from salvaged wood.



• The cherry cutting board, also made by Tracy, sits snugly under the edge of the handcrafted farmhouse sink. From: On the Site: Kober

• Chrome latches and pulls echo the stove's chrome trim. Latches and pulls: Restoration Hardware



homeowner tip

TRACY TRIM-HANSON DUFFY, BOSTON, MASS.

"If you aren't sure about cabinet pulls, insert in three samples and test them out. We blew \$25, but it beat buyer's remorse."



tin ceiling step-by-step
Learn how to install a tin ceiling panel at theadhouse.com/learn



• The aluminum ceiling was installed by Doug who still recalls his wire shimmers. Ceiling: 36" Blue Ins. Pendant lights: Restoration Hardware

• Open shelves at upper cabinets were painted off-white to match the walls, while light green grays the lower walls. Green paint: Sherwin Williams. Remanufactured white paint: Benjamin Moore White Dove



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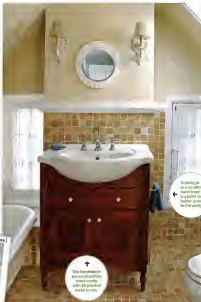
Budget bath revamp

Using the contractor's surplus and some stock finds gave this shoestring redo a high-end look

by KELLY BARNUM • Photography MEGAN CHAPMAN

Sometimes staying flexible is the secret to renovation success. It's how Winnetka, Illinois, homeowner Catherine Karaban was able to afford her husband's dream bathroom overhaul on a \$4,000 budget. The role played bath in her 1921 Tudor Revival, the room is curiously small, but what beggared her was its look, complete with a rusted tub and cracked tile floor. "It was like a gas station bathroom," she says. "It never looked clean." Karaban was already ending the kitchen and two downstairs baths when she asked contractor Charlie Schumacher to squeeze in towels to the one upstairs. When he offered her a stash of marble tile—left over from another job—an half price, she said yes, even though yellow wasn't her first choice. Schumacher's other money-saving idea, of keeping the 18-inch-deep tub and having it professionally cleaned, was a winner too. The stylistic gamble paid off. Now the room is her golden-rod retreat, says Catherine. "Perfect for my long soaks."

Dead-end Cracked tiles and a rusted bathtub recently made the tiny bath seem like a dead-end. Tumbled marble squares and a marble vanity rescued it in warm colors, brass and brass. Home Depot Logo



Building in as a smaller hand-laid tile is a better choice for the vanity.

The homeowner personalized the vanity with tin-painted metal knobs.

painted tub An on-the-bubble alternative to building a surround for the old cast-iron tub, the contractor painted the exposed sides with acrylic latex and tiled a gap on top with wallboard.

—William Riker, Sheridan Grayer



new marble tile An stash of marble took the homeowner less than half its market price of \$30 per square foot. Installation added another \$400.

—Bob Riker

before + after

The budgeted layout and tub stayed the same. The sink and toilet were swapped out for new.

1 Created a tuxedo for the tub In as much space between the window and tub, an unsavory gap, as the tub's only feasible location blocks the convenient cupboard-lined entry.

2 Installed the tub in place, giving it a light quarter and low-sloped ceiling, which runs from 4 feet to 7 feet at its highest point.

3 Maximized space between tub and toilet with a requirement of only 33 inches deep instead of 15 inches deep. The old one, backing into the tub, required 2 inches between it and the tub and 21 inches to the toilet.



more online
See how to professionally refinish a bathtub at thefixation.com/fixtub



vintage-style sconces Antiques and glass pendants with brass knobs and brass knobs were installed right above the old path bath door area.

—James Stedman/Ally



chair rail A new brass rail curved profile was added right on top of the glass door that already ran up the wall. When paint cleaned up the walling, and making radiator cover built and from just Benjamin Moore's Cream White and White Dove.

Better Sleep Better Health Better Bed

Others agree.



Happiness



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shopping

Glass doorknobs

Give your interior doors a little sparkle with clear, colored, or patterned glass knobs

By MICHAEL DOCKENDECK • Photographs by TERRY O'NEILL

Maybe you're waiting to dress up the new door to your bedroom, bath, or study. Or maybe your old one could use a bit of bling. Either way, adding a glass knob is an easy upgrade. First introduced in the 1830s, glass doorknobs rose in popularity around World War I, when metals were in short supply. Today they're back in style again, with choices ranging from jewel-jointed beauties inspired by the Victorian era to done-up bits that date to the 1920s to colorful handblown pieces past and present—old-country art glass. Just take your pick (the 50 gems on these pages).



speckled globe

BLUM (2010) This globe knob is a speckled glass knob with a dark base. It's a good choice for a door that's not too heavy.

PATTERNED

jewel-toned

BLUM (2010) Jewel-toned knobs are a good choice for a door that's not too heavy.



COLOR



vintage classic

BLUM (2010) This knob is a classic choice for a door that's not too heavy.

clear

CLEAR

Versatile clear knobs made to style from perfectly plain to dramatically faceted. Pick a pair to finish your other hardware choices.

budget pick



victorian style

CLASSIC DESIGN
At this price, you might want to make all the doors in your house. \$6.99 each. dwellwellhardware.com



precision cut

ALUMINUM

Designed in 1941, this multi-faceted clear knob is a crystal globe in a more elegant finish. \$6.99 each. www.dwellhardware.com

size and shape

CLASSIC DESIGN
This clear vintage knob with no pattern in its base would add a welcoming touch to a guest suite. \$6.50 a pair. www.dwellhardware.com

squared off

ALUMINUM COB

Start the door to a party or hall in style with a cheery ice cube atop a rounded variety. \$12.99 each. www.dwellhardware.com



1930s redux

ALUMINUM

With its flat, grooved base, this streamlined knob looks like a real Depression-era affordable piece. \$7.99 each. www.dwellhardware.com



spa signal

ALUMINUM

With a bubblework or stylized bubble design, this knob makes the most for your relaxation-minded bath (complete with perfect tub). \$6.99 each. www.dwellhardware.com



personalize it

PERSONALIZED HARDWARE

Let clients know your products are custom-made with a vintage-style knob inscribed with your monogram. \$24.99 each. www.dwellhardware.com

faded fleur

ALUMINUM HARDWARE

This oval-fleur-de-lis knob's reproduction would dress up a guest or a guest bedroom. \$4.99 each. www.dwellhardware.com



door candy

ALUMINUM

Use this door knob with a matching center to attract in a guest bedroom like a colorful jellybean. \$4.99 each. www.dwellhardware.com



budget pick



bubbled up

ALUMINUM COB

With its unique, raised, and bubble-like base, this knob would make a great addition to a guest bedroom door. \$12.99 each. www.dwellhardware.com



1970s update

ALUMINUM

A "roughness" shape on a knob recalls this knob would suit a retro-themed living space. \$6.99 each. www.dwellhardware.com

COLORED

When you need colored knobs to dress up a home or public space—the location, the room, the demand, the knob.

PATTERNED

Swirls, stripes and spots were common in mid-20th-century art glass. Knobs with such patterns provide an accent that can be either fun or formal.

cut glass

GLASS IN THE ARTS

With elegant detailing, even a colorful center this vibrant style looks better in forms in a period bedroom. \$14.99 each. www.dwellhardware.com



well marbled

ALUMINUM GLASS

Hand-blown in gold, forest marble, black and white or dynamic second-hand or buyer. \$12.99 each. www.dwellhardware.com



budget pick



art nouveau update

ALUMINUM HARDWARE

This knob's design is a nod to the art nouveau style, which could dress up a rustic living room. \$12.99 each. www.dwellhardware.com

for drama

ALUMINUM GLASS

This knob's deep, dark, and rich base provides enough substance to look up a guest or guest room. \$14.99 each. www.dwellhardware.com

controlled bubbles

ALUMINUM GLASS

Hand-blown in gold, forest marble, black and white or dynamic second-hand or buyer. \$12.99 each. www.dwellhardware.com

add one to your door

Learn how to install hardware and more at dwellhardware.com/10min

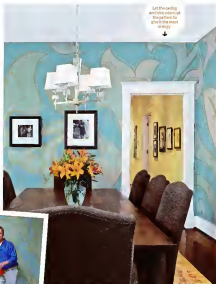


Add style with an oversized pattern

With this relatively simple decorative painting technique, you can get the look of high-end wall coverings without the high price—or the pro
by DEBORAH BALDWIN • Photographs by CHRISTOPHER WITTEMAN/SHUTTERSTOCK

Cost: About \$70
Time: About five days
Difficulty: Intermediate
assuming you have a sure hand and a good eye

For a new-old-world look that is more personal than wallpaper, grab some blackboard chalk and start sketching. You'll need a pattern first, of course, so start small and think big. That's how decorative painter Brian Carter breathed new life into the dining room shown here. First, he hunted up a lovely floral wallpaper pattern to adapt as a larger, looser drawing. Then, using tracing paper, he copied the bigger shapes, stripping away the small stuff. Finally, he transferred his drawing to the walls, stepping up the scale dramatically for a fresh, whimsical effect. Hand-painted flowers, scrolls, and leaves cover the walls, making them even more dynamic as they travel around the room, bumping up against the trim. Old or tools of his trade include a chalk line to create a grid on the walls and an artist's round brush for continuous control when making curving lines. The paint is off-white regular interior latex. Carter recommends trying out this technique in a little powder room, where it's easy to take a big risk, or in a dining room, adding, "It's a good place to be theatrical since you're mostly there in the evening." Read on for the steps he took to turn a fairly flat wall into a whimsical jewel of curves and color.



ABOVE: After a brief stylist and decorative painter, Brian Carter (INSET) transferred tracings of his room with chalk, tracing paper, an artist's brush, and latex paint.

Let the ceiling and trim stand out; the pattern is given the most priority.

HOW TO DO IT

1. Make a pattern. Using a pencil and tracing paper, borrow a pattern from a book or a piece of wallpaper, fabric, or even gift wrap. If the design is on an object like a ring, take a photo, make a photocopy, and enlarge it. Trace the largest shapes and make the pattern wider than it is tall so that it can wrap the room like a band. Avoid repetitions.



3. Paint the outlines. Carter started out with walls painted a neutral pale blue and used Benjamin Moore's Star Gold for the outlines, applying it right over the chalk with a round artist's brush, ending, smooth strokes. Let the paint dry. Then gently erase the remaining grid with a damp cloth so that it won't distract you during Step 4.

2. Create a grid. Using white chalk, snap vertical and horizontal chalk lines on the walls at 12-inch intervals. Then draw a grid of 1-inch squares on the finished pattern (see Photo 1). Use chalk to transfer the design, now 12 times larger, square by square onto the walls. Stop back and make sure the design connects gracefully.



4. Add two offily contrasting shades. Carter used Benjamin Moore's Salisbury Green inside the lines and Provence Blue for the background. Using the same artist's brush, he dabbed on the paint to create a swirled effect, letting a bit of the pale-blue base color show through. This adds depth. Any mistakes can be easily painted over.

The
15
Secret

To make smooth, curving lines, use a round #12 artist's brush, which offers more control than a house painter's brush.
Robert Spangher/brush.com

free
template
Download a design for the entire room here: bit.ly/10000000

Ad
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HOUSE WE ALL
BUILD.

Each time you build, you're building more than just a house. You're building a legacy. Earthshark is a national organization that promotes sustainable building practices and encourages homeowners to build green. We offer a variety of resources, including a comprehensive guide to green building, a list of local green building organizations, and a directory of green building professionals. We also offer a variety of services, including energy audits, green building consultations, and green building training. For more information, visit www.earthshark.org.

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Earthshark

salvage
style

Fancy fireplace fronts

The Victorians used them to improve the look of their hearths in the off-season, but you can put them to work today to upgrade your interior rooms year-round. By AMY R. FUGER • Photograph by KIRSTEN LARSEN



convert
an ornate
cover into
a fireproof
box



They're called fireplace summer fronts, and they arches antique looks, with their carved floral motifs, painted scenes, and grilles of Egyptian pharaohs and Roman warriors.

When summer fronts were first made, in the second half of the 19th century, homeowners relied on fireplaces heated by wood, coal, or gas to heat their homes. "In the warm months, they would cover the fireplace opening so as not to let an idle pot," says Eric J. Nordstrom, owner of Urban Remains, a salvage shop in Chicago. "Come winter, they'd remove the front and speak up a fire."

That changed in the thermostat age. Today the stylish fronts are often left in place year-round, particularly when a fireplace has been sealed off. Coupled with the hardware used to fill in the firebox, they help block drafts when the outdoor temperature drops and keep cooled air from escaping when the mercury rises.

As with many handsome old house parts, the utility of summer fronts is still



abop smart sunken fronts with pattern of forest or human figures. The first one at Jennifer Dwyer in New York City cost over \$300 for cover. Fronts with geometric designs go for about half that!

ending. Even basic covers without fireplaces can use the decorative panels in new and creative ways.

To start one for yourself, visit a salvage shop, where prices typically start at \$165 for a simple cast-iron model with a lacy floral design or a solid one piece stamped with a geometric pattern. Summer fronts with their mosaics or arched surrounds will stretch all for a bit more.

Nordstrom says her customers have implemented flared fronts into dramatic wall-mounted nooses by adding a light cover and lining them from behind with long shide paper (\$8.25 a yard at Target.com). Solid fronts make great backdrops for behind sinks and built-in cooktops.

For a depiction project that plays off a cover's original function, try what my friend Jennifer McLaughlin and I did and make the front of a sturdy log rack. Read on to learn how to create one of your own.

STEP BY STEP

Build a log rack out of a fireplace cover

By using a vintage fireplace front as the basis for a log storage rack instead of as a hearth cover, you can get cozy by an open fire and admire the intricate detailing in the sturdy metal panel at the same time. For help building the one shown below I called on my friend Jennifer. She's got mad carpentry skills and, having studied theater design, she has a flair for the dramatic. Such qualities come in handy when dealing with fire—and power tools. In addition to the metal front, which has a detachable arched surround, our materials list included wood boards for the rack's bottom and steel angle iron for its back. Rather than beat out the blacksmith, we joined all the pieces with hefty nuts and 2½-inch bolts. ➔



Cost: \$200 for the front, wood rails, angle iron, and fasteners.
Time: 3 hours
Difficulty: Moderate
And be sure to watch your power while using cutting blade.

This rack actually resembles a chair. It's the shape that helps it stay in place when the cover is closed.

Pull-down kitchen faucets

Two nearly identical models offer a lesson: Cheap isn't always a bargain, and expensive doesn't always mean better in every way. BY KELLY DANKER • Photographs by TED MORRISON

First, the good news: Lots of pull-down faucets have an attractive profile and some sort of warranty. Most are made mostly of brass with a stainless-steel finish and have a rubber with ceramic discs, which is just what the plumber ordered. Now for the bad part: There are dozens of brands, with prices all over the map. So The Old House looked at a luxury pick and its bargain counterpart to identify the qualities to look about when you consider all the options in between. Our prices included an extra long spray hose on the bargain model for easy maneuvering around a cupcake and mounting pan, and the D.D. ready fittings on the high end model. Check out their other features to help guide you through your next purchase.



High-End

Kallista's Vir Stil

PULL-DOWN KITCHEN FAUCET

Height: 17 inches Height: 17 inches Warranty: 5 years

IS IT WORTH IT?

If you value sleek design more than prefer the look of a solid-brass spray head, and want to invest in a faucet for the long haul.

Settings

Each resistant brushed steel faucet comes only in one spray setting.

+\$1,169

1. Use a wire brush to knock off rusty spots on the summer iron. Spray on a rust-inhibiting sealer to prevent any future corrosion.



2. Mark the desired length of the holder (ours is 21 inches) on two 3 1/2-by-8-inch hardwood boards. Use a square to cut the boards, which will serve as the handles. Cut a third rail to the width of the summer front for the back.



3. For the vertical back supports, measure the height of the summer front and mark the length on a pair of 2-by-6-inch angle iron. Clamp the angles to your worktable and cut them. Cut a second pair of 6-inch angles to fasten to the front itself.



4. On one side of each L-shaped angle iron, mark for screw holes at 1/4 inch and 2 inches from the bottom end. Then flip the angle, and mark the same measurements from the top on its opposing side.



watch it, learn it, do it
View a step-by-step video for this fix, included at bit.ly/pricefixes



5. Steady a start punch on the mark, and tap it with a hammer. The dent will prevent your bit from moving off the mark when you drill for the holes. Now bore holes for 1/4-inch bolts in all four angles.



6. Position the 6-inch angle iron vertically on the back of the summer front, and use the punch to mark where the bolts will secure the pieces. Drill holes in the summer front. Insert the bolts, and twist on the nuts.



7. Mark on the bottom wood rails where the horizontal wood rails should be placed where they'll be joined with the angle iron. Drill for the bolt holes.



8. Line up the holes at one end of the horizontal wood rails with those in the angle iron beyond the metal front. Insert the screws and twist on the nuts.



9. Fit the bottoms of the long angle iron around the rear ends of the wood rails, and fasten the pieces together. Secure the wood support piece between the angle iron at their tops and put yourself on the back. Your new rack is ready to be stocked with logs.



finish
Standard chrome electroplated over brass.

base
Die-cast nylon and vinyl base mounts. Mounts long enough to attach to the shoving ports—on temp with under the sink support.

spray head
All plastic with a painted chrome finish. Less durable than brushed. Spider tubing it can be done. No pump action, so it's not as good as some long line.

handle and mixing valve
Lightweight chrome over stainless steel with a long handle. Valve cartridge is equipped with ceramic discs.

fixtures
Every fixture is copper below, steel below the water supply connection are not included.



pro advice
HOWARD THERY, FEN PLUMBING AND HEATING EXPERT

"Buy the best faucet you can afford—you're going to use it every day. Ceramic discs are key. And stick with a known brand so that you'll be able to find replacement parts down the road."

Budget

\$219+

Price Pfister's Ashfield

LEVER HANDLE POLL-CUT KIT CHROMED

Model: 17 Series. Weight: 4.5 pounds. Warranty: Lifetime

IS IT WORTH IT?

If you view the faucet as a one-time investment at a price you won't regret, should you decide to change it out for additional looks or finish in a few years.



made your choice?

Learn how to install it and other fixes at bit.ly/pricefixes

Farmhouse dining room

Warm and inviting, the vintage-look decor here was put together with mostly new materials. Here's how you can duplicate it in your home. BY KELLY HANSEN • Photography by TERRY FORBES, STYLING BY TERRY FORBES • Photos by TERRY FORBES

Comfortable yet clean-lined, this eat-dine-to-dinner spot looks as if it might have been inherited from some mid-19th-century farmhouse—though the house around it is just nine years old. Its beadboard walls, painted wood floor, cooking hearth, and open shelves stacked with colorful ceramic bowls are hallmarks of farmhouses built over 100 years ago. In those earlier homes, the main first floor was one open, multipurpose area for cooking, eating, and living, not unlike today's open-plan spaces. The secret to getting the look together? “Find simple new pieces to mix with some that have a little age on them, and paint built-in and woodwork traditional white to disguise their age,” says author Gill Schuler, whose America, New York, house is shown on these pages. Here are elements you can assemble for a similar look.

earthenware bowls
Four yellow, white, and red bowls, and a red bowl, all from the same set, are shown in the photo. These bowls are made in the USA. Yellow is \$10 per set of three. www.earthenware.com. Red is \$10 per set. www.earthenware.com.



old-brick fireplace front
This one just arrived with painted concrete veneer in an antique finish. Just don't temper with the interior a fire heat source. \$100 at www.earthenware.com.



farmhouse table
A long rectangular work and dining surface atop sturdy legs made of original millipiece wood. Here is \$170 by Gill Schuler. www.earthenware.com.



classic white beadboard
Traditional beadboard every 2 to 3 inches makes walls stand out. A V-shaped base gives a slight shadow. Painted MDF boards, \$12 per square foot. www.earthenware.com.



double-hung window
An empty wall (here and outside) is a smart place for open shelves.



ceiling cook light
This reproduction work lamp, styled after those brought to the New World from the Old, can be raised, lowered, and tilted. The light is made of metal and has a glass globe. It costs \$120. www.earthenware.com.

painted chairs
These were popular in colonial kitchens. This painted 18th-century original from Massachusetts is a chairmaker for over 100 years that doesn't do doors. It's a sign to an antique shop that a splendorous chair would be true to the style. \$295. www.earthenware.com.



painted floor
Brass and red with a white-painted effect make a painted floor. Use enough to get the most even finish. Painted floor from the Bay State. The phone is 617-252-1111. www.earthenware.com.



peo advice
FARMHOUSE ALONG THE COLORADO RIVER
“Contrary to popular thinking, a painted floor will hold up for years, if you keep it free of dust and grit.”



antique frame
Gilding, originally helped reflect candlelight. Like the frame over the hearth, this is a fine painted floor—\$100. The phone is 617-252-1111. www.earthenware.com.

Health-conscious cabinets

Why a pediatrician mom chose nontoxic kitchen cabinets for her young family's vintage home

By KATH HANCOCK • Photography by BUSTY STECKLAND



Great house, shabby kitchen. That about sums up the attitudes of Penelope Skelly and her husband Seth after buying their 1937 Colonial Revival in Dobbs Ferry, New York. While most of the place was deemed in handsome midwife, the kitchen's original solid-wood cabinetry had been ripped out in favor of cheap laminate boxes. "They were these 1970s cheapo cabinets—the kind I grew up with and always disliked," says Penelope. They had to go.

The Skellys wanted traditional-looking, well-built replacements. But most important, they wanted ones that would support their environmental impact and help safeguard their family's health. They considered cabinets made with salvaged lumber and ones finished with nontoxic paints. And they weighed the 28 percent premium they'd have to pay for such custom cabinets against the benefits of keeping their processes and their indoor air clean. After months of research, the Skellys finally found the perfect cabinets. To help maximize your search for eco- and health-friendly cabinets, The Old House asked Penelope to share her best decorating advice.

Q: What were your must-have qualities for green cabinets?

A: For the mother of four children, but I'm also a pediatrician. Kids are bombarded with toxins everywhere they go, and I wanted our house to be a sanctuary. The cabinets had to be free of the formaldehyde typically used in others, and the off-gassing VOCs found in lots of paints. Being locally made was also important so that they wouldn't have to be shipped too far.

Q: That's a tall order. How did you find a cabinetmaker to fill it?

A: What saved us was a design firm called Green Change in nearby New Mills, New York. The owner turned us on to Bruce Epp, a company only 30 miles away from here. Their custom cabinets are made with

14-ply plywood held together with water-based adhesives. For the doors, we used old-growth solid wood, bamboo, or a non-formaldehyde medium-density fiberboard (MDF).

Q: You can get green cabinets at Lowe's. Why go custom?

A: We wanted something specific—nontoxic, mid-century, locally made cabinetry. So we knew we'd have to pay more. Ours cost about 20 percent more than regular custom and considerably more than stock. But considering how well they're made, and how we maximize the space in our small kitchen, it was worth it. The delivery time was also quick—just six weeks.

Q: Was it tough finding cabinets in a period style to match your old house?

A: We definitely needed something old-fashioned looking. Bamboo wouldn't do, but since Bruce and Kory cabinets are custom, we got a traditional rail-and-stool door with a white-painted finish that wouldn't clash with the kitchen's exposed wood trim. For the hardware, we used salvaged glass handles.

Q: How have your green cabinets held up to the inevitable leaky sink pipes or tomato-sauce splatters?

A: Our cabinets have a limited lifetime warranty, which gives us peace of mind. In retro-

spect, we might have asked the dealer if we could contact former customers to check how things were working out. But in fact, no messes go, our claim has a low VOC clear coat that protects them from kitchen disasters. But even without the extra finish, the warranty should hold it up.

Q: Did you save the 1970s cabinets—for garage storage, perhaps?

A: They were pretty much shot. But we did reuse an original built-in bench. Once I tried off the fake-wood paneling, it was really beautiful. I'm so glad we could salvage something. After all, preserving what's already there is the greenest thing to do. ■



pro advice ALANNAH GREEN, CONTRACTOR, NEW MILLS, NY

"Rather than buy new cabinets, you can give your existing wood boxes an eco-friendly makeover by refinishing them with a low-VOC primer and paint."



Photo by copyright © by 3D Ltd with cabinet style sheets

1. **brushback MDF** The formaldehyde-free bonded-MDF cabinets can trigger asthma attacks. This finished long door is also available in white. www.greenchange.com

2. **bamboo** Bamboo grows faster than wood—about 100 feet in 60 days, making it more easily renewed. The natural color of this solid bamboo door from Paul Kelly Cabinets is perfect with a clear low-VOC finish. \$400. www.greenchange.com

3. **sustainable solid** This solid-wood door by Newgate is made of plantation-grown white-oak maple veneer. It's certified by the Kilmer Cultural Industries Association's Rivermark Assembly Program, which enforces compliance with environmental and minimal toxic finishes and binders. \$250 (lower cost).

4. **certified solid wood** This solid-maple Arts and Crafts-style door with olive-oil finish by Melkely gets the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) stamp for sustainability. About \$200 (lower cost).

5. **salvaged wood** This door (first to left) was hand-crafted from white pine flooring removed from a demolished Dutch Colonial. \$300. www.greenchange.com

What's in your nontoxic cabinet?

Green kitchen cabinets use safe, low-toxicity materials. But these days you can get cabinets with solid doors in a variety of styles and prices. says Jo Powell of the Green Depot in Newark, New Jersey. "Most people have health concerns," Powell adds. But they also want cabinets that look good and are built with sustainable materials. These five samples achieve both.

"I wanted kitchen cabinets that wouldn't off-gas harmful chemicals." —PENLOPE SKELLY, PEDIATRICIAN

giftmagcentral.com



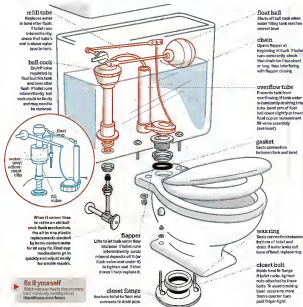
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whaddaya
call it?

How to speak toilet

A toilet that leaks or runs is an easy home-owner fix—if you know how to diagnose the trouble. ID parts and problems with this handy guide, and hit the hardware store with confidence. **INTERMEDIATE RATOR**—DIAGNOSIS INTERMEDIATE CRAFTSMAN.



Fix yourself
Watch videos on how to stop a running toilet with today's weekly deal at ibuyfurniture.com/fixme

closet storage
Appliances built for food and
condiments fit snugly into

Vintage-look dresser vanity

Convert a favorite furniture piece into a sink stand—or take your pick from among our ready-made choices at diy.com/magazine

New vanity styles combine a traditional bathroom design as well as the dresser profile, which beautifully blends modern function with the workhorse look that was so common before indoor plumbing.

To get one for a bath today, you can choose from the many furniture-like vanities available on the market. Or, if you're handy, you can easily convert a beautiful old dresser—or a modern one if that's your style—into a sink cabinet. You're both choosing a clean with doors and as few drawers as possible to better accommodate the plumbing. Read on to see what's involved in making an old dresser into a new sink station, or find a guide to suit the bath your space.

antique look-style

Many new-dresser vanities mimic fine-old furniture; this one has the cabinet legs, carved and carved lines of a Louis XV chest. Single-basin vanity. \$399. bedbathandbeyond.com



COURTESY, BED BATH & BEYOND; PHOTO: JEFFREY M. LARSEN

build it

You can turn an old dresser into a vanity by reconfiguring the top drawer, drilling holes for the plumbing, and installing a new top and sink.

Price: Starting at \$200 for basic top, plus cost of the dresser
Time: 4 hours
Difficulty: Moderate. Requires enough know-how to close top and secure new plumbing to walls.

1. **Convert the dresser.** Pull out the drawer and detach the drawer face. Set aside the back, sides, and bottom. Attach a new top to the dresser front.
2. **Remove the top.** Unscrew the wood top from the dresser carcass by loosening the fasteners through the drawer opening.
3. **Get plumbing holes.** Scribe white chalk onto the cut ends of your bathroom seating plumbing, then push the dresser against the pipes to mark their locations on the vanity back. Cut holes with a drill/Router fitted with the appropriate hole saw.
4. **Install the top and sink.** Set the new stone counter in a bead of caulk, which is enough to keep the heavy top from shifting. Install the undermount sink. Attach the new dresser with tray hardware. Change pulls and hinges if desired.
5. **Connect the plumbing.** Run the piping from the wall through the back of the dresser and connect it to the sink and faucet.



how to install

Get step-by-step instructions on installing a new sink and undermount sink at diy.com/magazine

build it or buy it

buy it

You can choose among dresser-style vanities in a variety of woods, with different finishes and hardware.

\$600+ the basic model

Blackwood and simple lines keep this price down on this Capetown vanity—complete top included. costco.com



\$1,400+ the mid-range

Cherry veneer and brass hardware add to the price of this Scorsen vanity. sawdustpot.com



\$1,700+ the luxury model

The handmade Peruvia vanity owes its price to quality-wood box hand-dressed every corner, and antique-style hardware. www.vanityforless.com

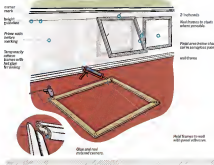


Day-to-day timeline

VIDEO Smooth and prime the wall where the frames will go, then make essential taping layout. Once you have the frame size established, calculate how much wallboard you will need and go shopping.

SAY WHAT! Create a jig to help you build the frames square and tight. Cut all the molding to size and build all the frames.

SENSEY Glue and seal all the frames to the wall. Fill and sand the end holes, and paint the area below the chair rail.



tools you need

random orbit sander
1 1/2 inch TPO joint power
overlapping square
framing square
precision level ruler (look for
\$50 per foot with compass)
roller saw
spring clamps
caulk gun
hot glue gun
small putty knife
paintbrush and paint roller

materials to buy

molding: Typically, balance top
or panel molding works best for
creating frames. Make sure
to get 3/8 x 20 inch end mean
then you'll have a fit to
account for extra wood waste.
wrap plywood and
wood blocks to make a jig
for building the frames
2 inch wide wall
board glue
280 grit sandpaper for
smoothing sanded boards
and 120 grit sandpaper
panel adhesive to secure
the frames to the wall
hot glue cartridge
wood putty
paintable caulk
primer or paint

2. Mark the layout

The spacing between wall frames should be from 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 inches, but the space above and below can be as much as 4 inches. Whatever spacing you choose, mark first all around the room. The frames can change size, but the measurement of frames, below, and between them must remain consistent.

A To determine the width of the frames for a particular wall, first measure the length of the wall. Add to the number of frames that span that wall and multiply by the spacing between frames. Subtract that sum from the length of the wall. Divide the remainder by the number of frames. That is the outside width of each frame. (See Tip at right for a helpful formula.)

Call out loud to the other helper to mark the bottom of the chair rail and the top of the wall.

B Measure and mark where the outside corner of each frame falls on the layout line.



Tip Use this formula to calculate frame size: $wf = (L + 2f) / f + 1$ for wf is the wall width, L is the length of the wall, f is the number of frames, and 1 is the frame width. So, for example, a 60-inch wall with 3 frames (a 12-inch gap) would mean each frame is 16 inches wide: $60 = (L + 2f) / f + 1$ $60 = (L + 2 \times 3) / 3 + 1$ $60 = (L + 6) / 3 + 1$ $60 = L / 3 + 3$ $57 = L / 3$ $171 = L$ $171 / 10.5 = 16.28$ ≈ 16

3. Make a jig

A jig is a guide that helps keep your work uniform in size or shape. This one, made from plywood and scrap lumber, is for aligning the square corners of the frames.

A Using a framing square, draw two perpendicular lines on the plywood. Position the lines far enough from the edges of the plywood to accommodate a piece of molding.

B Determine the inside width of the molded frame you're designing. Cut a piece of scrap wood slightly shorter than that measurement. Position the scrap across one of the lines on the plywood and set the corner of the other line on the scrap.

C Cut one or more pieces of scrap to be perpendicular to the first piece. Make sure that the two pieces together will add up to the inside measurement of your wanted frame. Use a framing square to check that the two pieces of scrap are perpendicular to each other. Tack the scraped scrap in place.



see how
it's done

Watch videos of this
weekend remodel at
www.youtube.com

1. Prep the walls

Smoothing and priming the walls before applying the frames avoids the drips and blobs that often accompany painting around the molding when it's already in place.

A Using a random orbit sander and 280-grit sandpaper, smooth the walls in the area under the molding chair rail.

B Prime the walls below the chair rail. Let the primer dry completely before continuing.

Tip Since you have the materials out already, place to prime your molding before installing. This will save you time later.



4. Build the frames

To make window frames, you'll need to cut your molding into consistent pieces. You can do this by clamping a piece of scrap wood to the fence on your table saw to act as a stop, allowing you to make matching pieces without measuring every time. It also helps to have a lot of all the cuts you'll need ready ahead of time and to mark each piece's length on the back after you cut it.

A Place a piece of molding rightside up on the saw deck, let edge against the fence. Set the blade to the right at 45 degrees. Cut the left end of the molding at this angle. Measure out the desired length and let molding along the fence back edge and mark it. Set the blade to the left and set it to 45 degrees. Slide the molding over to line up the blade with the mark and cut the right side of the molding. Leaving the blade down, swing the stop into place against the left end of the molding.

B Continue cutting all the molding for this length with the stop in place. Adjust the stop as close as the different lengths you need out, and out until you have the pieces you need to build all the frames.

C Using a chop saw, apply wood glue to the mitered ends of two adjoining pieces of molding and position them around the jig. Line up the corner where the edges are flush and square. Tight to the jig. Clamp the molding around the jig. Using a brace and 2 anchors, secure the mitered corner of the frame by shooting two nails into the end part of the molding. Continue assembling the frame corner by corner until complete. Make all the frames and set them aside.

TIP Because you'll be using a lot of glue over time, pour it out in a small bucket with a piece of scrap wood.

5

5. Install the frames

As you get the frames on the wall, it's more important to align them relatively parallel to the elements around them—the chair rail, a wall corner, or door trim—than to check them for level or plumb. The frames grip with paint adhesive, which will hold them to the wall permanently, but quick-drying hot glue clamps them in place while the adhesive sets.

A Using a caulk gun, apply paint adhesive to the four sides of the frame. Using a hot glue gun, put a dot of glue in each corner.

B Tap the top of the frame against the chair rail or the top of the wall. Make sure the frame is aligned correctly before pressing the whole piece into place. Using a brace and the frame to the wall once or on all four sides. Aim for the wall being flat if you know where it is.

6

6. Paint the frames

Flitting will help seal caulking before you paint, ensuring that the frames will look integral to the walls.

A Using a small putty knife or your finger, flit the red holes with putty. Caulk any gaps at the mitered corners or between the frames and the wall. Allow the putty and caulk to dry completely. Using 200-grit sandpaper, smooth all the nail holes and indentations and rough patches on the molding.

B Using a paintbrush and paint roller, seal the entire area from the chair rail upward with semigloss paint.

Shopping guide

Wall frames create the illusion of complex paneling, but you'll need to choose the right profile for your room to pull off the look. Both pine molding and bass wood make good frames. Just be sure they coordinate with the room's existing trim. Here are a few classic moldings and some guidelines on matching them to the right style.



*All prices are per linear foot for paper stock.

IT'S ALL IN THE details

An 1880s farmhouse
gained function and flow with a
period-perfect
addition and other tweaks
throughout



Amey and Adena Williams enjoying the vintage-style kitchen they built in their 120-year-old house.

by Deborah Siskin
Photographs by Helen Norrison
Produced by Celine Scorsone
Styling by Matthew Martello



KITCHEN
Old-style theme
accommodates
modern
amenities in
this new space.

The Details

(1) The country yellow cabinets' "aged" patina is the result of a chemical finish. The glass-fronted medicine cabinet (see p. 10) is a custom piece. The open shelf on the right holds a glass of water. Cabinet: Quality Custom Cabinetry

(2) The collection of gold and silver glassware is an heirloom of the building's previous owner.

(3) The French island is a custom creation of the author's. Island: Custom

(4) The hand-painted ceramic tile backsplash is a custom creation of the author's. Tile: French & Italian, French

(5) The custom built-in glass-fronted medicine cabinet is a custom creation of the author's. Cabinet: Quality Custom Cabinetry

dress it yourself
Learn how to style your
personal space at www.elledecor.com/interior

It all started with a stove. And then one thing led to another.

For years, well-dressed old-house purists kept and Alden Phillips blazed the 18th-century brick farmhouse just the way they had found it: largely untouched since the day it was built, complete with high ceilings, crown-molded front and back, and a wraparound porch. Perched on a hill in western Alexandria, Virginia, it had survived the years without losing its rural roots or unusual T-shape.

As the family grew—the Phillipses' three children are now 20, 18, and 12—they thought about adding bathrooms, updating the heating and cooling systems, maybe enlarging the kitchen. But each time, they paused. "This house was very precious," says Amy. Having a great room off the back and calling it a day was just not an option. "We didn't want it to be like other old houses that had been blown out and remodeled walls."

And yet.

As time went by, the constraints of the 19th-century house became clear. Its "T" was formed by a broad facade with a central gable and a narrow stem just one room wide and three rooms long. The kitchen, last updated in the 1930s, was stuck at the bottom of the stem with a buffer between its back door and the yard. When the couple entertained, as they often do, guests piled up in the kitchen, neglecting the pine-paneled parlor and living rooms flanking the front entry. More to the point, says Alden, "Amy's hobby, cooking, was the central point of our family life. And for all those years, she had three feet of counter space."

Still, they put two decades of 21st-century amenities on hold—and the day Alden offered to buy Amy a new stove.

As it happened, she knew exactly the one she wanted: a French import with two ovens and a custom-made cedar case of light- and low-BTU burners, able to dispense dinner for 12 in no time flat.

This workhorse would, of course, require breathing room, not to mention ventilation. So the couple was talking to local architect George Myers and local kitchen designer Robin Lynch about carving out the right space. Nothing else but, they were contemplating building a new kitchen—and a lot more.

Length, for one, was critical. "This area has a lot of old houses, but this happened to be one of the originals. I knew it would be fun because it would be a restoration with modern updates—keeping a lot of the old and replacing



EXTERIOR

The three-story addition, with its brick detailing and open-story wraparound porch, is hard to distinguish from the original 18th-century farmhouse.

THE DETAILS

1 The driveway on the left, which is shown extending to the right, separates the new porch from the original 18th-century porch.

2 The white-painted brick on the first-floor portion of the addition, which shows up in the kitchen, matches the existing one on the second portion of the wraparound porch on the other side of the house.

FLOOR PLANS

The addition includes a kitchen, pantry, microwave, and powder room. It also features a full bath and laundry room on the second floor and a bedroom bath and walk-in closet on the third. The existing second-floor bedrooms were converted to create a spacious master suite.



Legend: Solid line = Existing; Dashed line = Addition

COURTESY, GEORGE MYERS



PANTRY

Countertops and glass-front cabinets make the pantry a great place to store your favorite dishes.

The kitchen is a great place to spend time with family and friends. The new kitchen features a wraparound porch and a French stove.

The new kitchen features a wraparound porch and a French stove. The new kitchen features a wraparound porch and a French stove.



DINING ROOM

Laminate wallpaper and painted surrounding pieces in the dining room's 18th-century style.

The Details

J) A new wood opening leads to the established dining room, very much in the original style.

K) A new period-style mantel has been added to the fireplace, replacing a piece of art. Above it, through the arch, the original mantel is visible.

k



FOYER

The front door opens into the original front parlor, which has a carved wood post and painted tapered balustrade. The dining room is to the left and the pine-paneled parlor to the right.

The Details

J) The general contractor found the original front parlor floorboards under a layer of 20th-century oak and covered the original oak with a new layer of 14 layers of pine. The restored back

is the new area to contain the floor.

Myers also knew the perfect general contractor, Bob Kleider, a 27-year veteran who usually works on work on old houses, the former the better.

After puzzling over the house's awkward layout, the architect proposed a tall, carefully proportioned addition coming off the right side of the house in the back that would change the main T to more of a gentle J. Clad in brick to match the original structure, the addition would include a one-story basement that would help tie the house between old and new by doing a convincing imitation of a classic enclosed porch.

The addition would make room for a walk-in pantry with a window to channel light into the kitchen, and a hallway from the kitchen to a new powder room and to the old pine parlor and dining room. Equipped with a wet bar so that guests could pick up drinks along the way, the hallway would boost circulation while serving as a transition from new to old. There'd be no more legions in the kitchen, Amy noted, with traffic flowing in a figure 8.

Most space splitters would allow the family to spread out while holding every old houseowner's fantasy of big closets and luxurious baths. A bedroom would become a spacious master bath, and two small baths would be turned into walk-in closets, one large enough to serve as a dressing



room. Along the way the house would get a new forced-air heating system and central air, and thoughtful touches would help tie the story.

"Over the years, we had a lot of ideas of what we wanted to do," says Alden. So it was hardly surprising that the plan's inception—in kitchen as high-performing as Amy's career—was only one in a series of planning sessions. By that time the work was done, 14 long months later, friends could run all where the addition began or remember where the old house left off.

"With its brick room at and pitched roof opening the main portion of the house, the addition looks from the street as if it has always been there. Inside, it feels that way, too.

Alden, the real stickler in the family, says, "We wanted to make sure we made the new as much like the old that you couldn't tell the difference." He credits Myers with the big concept and Kleider with pulling down the visual curtain to install the house's historical feel while tying in old and new parts.

PINE ROOM

Targus and green leather party game painting was added to the existing front parlor in a previous renovation.

The Details

J) The original pine-paneled room was added to the existing front parlor in a previous renovation.

K) A new second-story addition was added to the existing front parlor in a previous renovation.

DRESSING CLINET

The bedroom
became a master
suite with a dressing
closet and a separate
walk-in closet.

The Details
a) The master closet
has a built-in bench,
drawers, and built-in
shelving.

b) A vintage glass
bench (purchased
from a local antique
store) sits on the
carpeted floor.



MASTER BATHROOM

A bathroom was added
near the master suite.
The original vanity
was replaced with a
new one.

The Details
a) The new vanity
has a built-in mirror
and a glass bench.
The original vanity
was replaced with a
new one.

b) The built-in mirror
has a built-in bench.
The original vanity
was replaced with a
new one.

MASTER BEDROOM

A built-in
wardrobe was
added to the
master bedroom.
The original
wardrobe was
replaced with a
new one.

The Details
a) The built-in
wardrobe has a
built-in bench and
drawers. The original
wardrobe was
replaced with a
new one.





A home-renovation
pro shares her
tricks of the trade

By Marissa Rodriguez
Photographs by
Deborah Whitlow Lowery
Styling by Brian Carter



Decor

Ways to Add Charm & Save Cash



When serial house rehabber Kara O'Brien bought her first fixer-upper in Atlanta, Georgia, she had to prove to her family that it was more than just a money pit. So she straggled on her trail and arrived at a *Thriller* DVD subscription and some DIY manuals. "I figured if you could learn recipes from books, you could learn how to fix things," she says. Kara also got her first lessons in resourcefulness, scoring strange yards and flea markets for affordable, period-appropriate materials and hardware. Having started *Laughing in the Basement* in 1999, she and partner Paolo have now specialized in saving other people's forgotten and forgotten the same custom vintage look without losing their budgets. Here, Kara shares some of her secrets.

Save an old
exquisite
bedroom
chairs and
use them as
a coffee table
with an old
upholstered
chair.

1

Add Vintage Style With String

If you want to replace a door, it's not always a good idea to throw out the old one. All you have to do is replace the glass panes with new ones and you're done. Kara O'Brien's first fixer-upper was a 1950s house with a lot of original panes in the windows and doors. Instead of replacing them, she decided to replace the glass panes with new ones and keep the old frames. It's a great way to save money and keep the old look. Kara's first fixer-upper was a 1950s house with a lot of original panes in the windows and doors. Instead of replacing them, she decided to replace the glass panes with new ones and keep the old frames. It's a great way to save money and keep the old look.



2

Create Distinctive Trim With Stock Parts

Adding simple woodwork details can make a major difference in a room—and can be done using low-cost lumber. For this living room, shantelope corner brace. Kers used salvaged boards and floor joists. Bought for \$10 per board, she had to bevel and trim them. But you can get the same look by using standard 1x6 trimmer along the walls and 1x4 shape on the ceiling. Then install 1½-inch-thick painted brace brackets.

Before

Look for good reproductions from unvarnished places, like these \$4 glasshouse pieces that house center

Center salvaged porch for details. These slatted glass pocket doors cost \$10 per panel less than new ones.



Think out of the box. Kers swapped this bar with a related antique tile with modern lines cut to fit.

3

Strip Away the Years

Ultimately, the best budget move is to buy antiques with lots of original details that can be restored with a bit of elbow grease. Of course, you can do it all yourself, but for longer pieces Kers likes to work with refinishing pros. For \$400, he will strip, repair, sand, dry, and reassemble them. Afterward, Kers paints the woodwork and finishes it with an amber shellac like the one originally used in the 1920s. A similar market in new wood cost \$3,000.

Before

4

Go for Batten-Style Wainscoting

Chair rail—bright painting is a great way to add both traditional style and depth to a room. Get the look and feel for less by making a frame that frames your seating wall into a recessed "panel." In this dining room, wainscoting was created using 2½ by 3½-inch battens. Left: battenboards, edge-molding, and grooved brackets holding up a 1½-inch-deep shaker—all out of less expensive salvaged wood. New wood painting would cost about \$10,000 more.



bonus how-to

For another popular wainscoting plan that uses 1½ by 3½-inch stock lumber, go to theoldhouse.com/frames



5

Opt for Paint-Grade Cabinets

Often the cost of stained woodwork by doing a high paint grade appears like proper or basic. Kara's husband repaired built the kitchen's laminate look cabinets, complete with distressed feet, corner trim and recessed-panel doors for \$23,000—about half what they cost in a high-grade cherry.



Before



↑
Glass-fronted subway tiles, \$4.25 per square foot, add to the kitchen's look as well as to its style.



↑
Search for the best value. Kara's clawfoot tub was just \$2 per square foot, including delivery.

6

Refurbish Rather Than Replace

With quality pieces, you should invest in professional refinishing. It'll cost \$700 to have the claw-foot tub sanded and refinished. And while you can't get an acrylic drop-in tub, a new claw-foot made of the same material could easily cost \$1,900 or more.

7



↑
Refinished doors can go for as little as \$20 each, but to get a good-looking, shaggy and distressed look.

Mix Old With Off-the-Shelf

Cherry pick your best source for any given piece. Kara's first bathroom vanity was a \$250 reproduction. Meanwhile, the granite-topped vanity with chrome faucets and doors and chrome legs was a \$400 home-center find.

8

Bargain for Stone-Yard Leftovers

To build a vanity, look for stone yard leftovers. Kara first wrote a local stone yard to see what scraps of marble or granite they might have left over from a larger job. Since there isn't much use for 28 by 28-inch slabs, you can usually talk the supplier into giving you a good deal on light and materials, which they'll also cut to your specifications. Paired with vitreous china under-mount sinks and heavy-duty oak non-swirl pedestals, Kara's vanity cost \$1,900 each to make. Similar reproductions versions can cost over \$2,000.



↑
The white vitreous china pedestal sinks and oak non-swirl pedestals look like a similar look.

9

Scout Sales and Discount Suppliers

Running through the clearance sections of home centers like Home Depot, end-of-the-day shops carry some great finds. Kara's \$1.75 per square foot vanity that would normally be \$8.99 per square foot. If you can't find enough of these affordable materials to do a whole room, however, one solution is to install stylish yet inexpensive beadboard on the end of the walls.



↑
Installing sheets of plywood to different-sized vinyl tile and grout lines (both epoxy and latex) can save time.

This Pro's Go-To Sources

Here are a few of the people and places Kara O'Brien regularly turns to when tackling a remodel.

Tub refinishing: Mike Holbrook's Surfaces Like New
Atlanta, GA: 770-639-6700,
centralatlantareno.com

Cabinetmaker: Greg McNeill & Sons, Atlanta, GA: 678-982-9852

Salvage dealer: Steven Wheeler, One Stop Antiques, Marietta, GA: 760-374-9689,
onestopantiques.com

Antique hardware: Scott Antique Market, Atlanta, GA:
scottantiquemarket.com
Reproduction Plumbing Signature Hardware: 800-855-2234,
clawfootsupply.com

50 Nifty Tricks for Big DIY Savings

by Josh Garskof

photographs by Wendell T. Webber

Remember when the tightness of relatives' cooed during the Depression was amusing? Our grandparents' certificates of deposit and plastic couch protectors seemed downright quaint when our own home-equity and retirement portfolios were ballooning. Suddenly, though, the pot-roast-and-potatoes ethic doesn't seem quite so kooky. We'd even say it's worthy of a luxury. So tip your cap to all your penny-pinching kin and read on for the best why-didn't-I-think-of-that idea for shrinking your household expenses, from getting free trees from your town's public works department to installing an under-sink filter to cut costs on pricey bottled water.



Buy firewood in the spring and season it yourself to save \$100 per cord.
See p. 14

Save up to \$50

1 Shorten your dryer vent hose. First, disconnect it and vacuum it out. Then trim the hose length so that it is just long enough for you to push the dryer a few feet out from the wall. A smart and useful suggestion makes your dryer run more efficiently. **COST** Free.

SAVINGS \$25 a year on electric, gas, or propane.

BONUS Your clothes will dry about 20 percent faster.

2 Rent specialized tools—gas-powered post hole diggers and table-mounted routers—from a rental center for a small fee. Go to a tool center for a better deal than a rental center after. **COST** \$1 to \$300 per day. **SAVINGS** \$50 or more for the same tool at a rental center.

BONUS Getting tools from a rental center is a great idea for a neighbor who you can swap tips.

3 Close closed doors to lower the square footage you're heating (or cooling). Shuffling closed doors around walls also helps to make it the house. **COST** Zero—although it may take a few minutes for your efforts to reach room temperature before you put them on. **SAVINGS** About \$50 per year off your energy bills.

BONUS You and your guests won't be cold either.

4 Choose one reusable paint for the entire house rather than buying a gallon of a particular color for each room and using only a fraction of each color. **COST** You have to forgo the twenty color combos in the paint.

thermostat brochures
SAVINGS \$50 on paint for three rooms

BONUS Crop white from a always-in-style and you'll never have to rummage around for the right color for touch-ups

5 Sign up for your utility's time-of-use plan. Many regional power suppliers offer rebates for reducing electricity consumption during periods of peak demand

COST Washing clothes and dishes at night during nonpeak hours and turning the thermostat up or down a couple of degrees during a cold snap (or hot wave)

SAVINGS \$25 to \$50 per month on your energy bills, depending on the season

BONUS You're saving the strain on the power grid—and lowering the odds of a blackout

6 Make your own cleaning solutions using acetone and ketchup to get rid of stains and grease. See thepioneer.com for recipes. **COST** A few bucks in extra pantry supplies

SAVINGS \$50 or more per year on commercial cleaners

BONUS Cleaners that don't contain harsh chemicals are healthier for your household

7 Turn down the thermostat any time after heater #1 is probably out at 140 degrees F to shorten the wait time for a strong shower. But 120 is an even 130 degrees plenty hot. **COST** A few minutes with a thermometer in the attic or in the

SAVINGS \$30 or more per year (up to 40 percent) on electricity or propane

BONUS Your beds are less likely to catch themselves in the max water temperature at 120



8

Install dimmer switches and use energy-efficient halogen bulbs, rather than incandescent. Dimmable CFLs are even brighter, but some flicker at low power.

COST \$40 per switch at homedepot.com, \$5 for a Philips halogen bulb at bulbs.com

SAVINGS \$20 per bulb on electricity over three years.

BONUS Halogens tend to contain incandescent, saving more money over the long haul on replacement lights

cost-cutting lighting ideas

1. Use energy-efficient bulbs.
2. Use dimmer switches.
3. Use natural light.
4. Use task lighting.
5. Use motion sensors.

9 Replace a central air-conditioning filter every month during the summer to keep air flowing freely through the ducts and reduce strain on the blower motor.

COST About \$10 for three filters

SAVINGS \$40 or more on cooling costs

BONUS New filters keep dust and mold from collecting on condenser coils, extending the equipment's life

10 Get your clothes dryer swept in the summer for an off-season price

COST Just a little for aught

SAVINGS \$30 per use

BONUS Get the job done at your convenience because sweeps schedules are wide open

11 Use your microwave instead of your range if you can melt the butter, or use the microwave to preheat the lasagna

COST \$25 for the microwave

BONUS Having dinner ready with fraction of the time

12 Use your laptop if it runs on batteries, which use 80 percent less electricity than a desktop computer

COST 20 cents to 35 cents per hour of use, depending on power consumption of all equipment

SAVINGS \$30 per year on energy

BONUS Having dinner ready with fraction of the time

COST Being vigilant about unplugging the battery charger and your computer is pulled as it doesn't consume unnecessary energy

SAVINGS \$30 per year off your electric bill

BONUS You can't use the sofa while perusing coupon sites

13 Insulate hot water lines. Prefabricated foam tubes fit right around the pipes. Thanks to

a lot along their length

COST 20 cents to 35 cents per foot of insulation, depending on pipe dimensions and all equipment

SAVINGS \$30 per year on energy

BONUS Having dinner ready with fraction of the time

14 Set up a makeshift hatch when a remodel project temporarily leaves you without a cooling area. If you need to prep surface, insulate, conformer and hinge

COST Nada (Get the work done to help move your help)

SAVINGS \$50 per day on a hot day

BONUS You won't pack on extra pounds from steamed crab legs

15 Choose a light-colored roof. Long-pole shingles perfectly if you live down south, will reduce the solar heat gain that reflects

reducing the need for reconditioning. Up north the cooling benefit is offset somewhat by the loss of solar warming in the winter

COST The same as dark roofing

SAVINGS \$40 per year or more

or summer cooling costs

BONUS Your "cool roof" may cost you a utility company rebate

Save up to \$150

16 Get your fall yard cleanup done to clear your gutters instead of having a gutter guy make a special trip

COST \$100 for your lawn care

SAVINGS \$200 or more that you're not paying the gutter guy

BONUS There's no risk of gutter guys being dumped onto your lawn after all the leaves have been blown and raked

17 Set your computer to sleep—not just the monitor, but the hard drive, too—to that it automatically dims after 10 minutes of inactivity

COST It may take off when you don't watch it, so you'll have to punch a key to wake it up

SAVINGS \$75 per year off your electric bill

BONUS Let's face it, some of the best ways to save are the ones you don't think of

18

Want to replace your grill, lawn mower, or garden hose? See the list, where items such as a lawn mower to make even the holiday decorations and snowblowers.

COST Making do with what you have this summer

SAVINGS \$100 or more per item

BONUS Replacements are available online, such as target.com—skip the weekly shopping routine

19 Shop for phone, electric and cable service at wholesale cost. It's like Target for utilities. Enter your ZIP code and compare rates offered by providers in your area

20

more off-season deals

at thepioneer.com/bonus

at thepioneer.com/bonus

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at thepioneer.com/bonus



Free tree-care clinic

At Home Depot's La Crosse Technology 800 Sign-A-Power charger and assorted NEMM batteries (the best kind of an in-home)

22

Plant a deciduous tree on the south, west, or east side of your house. Once mature, it'll shade your east and west roof cooling nearby up to 33 percent.

COBT \$25 to \$75, depending on the tree species, at fast-growing-trees.com.

SAVINGS About \$200 per year on air-conditioning.

BONUS The tree drops its leaves each fall, so you'll still get the warming benefit of winter sun.

COBT A few minutes online.

SAVINGS Up to \$150 per year on your utility bills.

BONUS The switch to a new energy company can be made without an in-home service call or fee and you can skip your old phone number.

COBT 1 hour self-primers

SAVINGS \$100 to \$200 for each new metered shrub you don't have to buy

BONUS Because the plant is already established, it won't need the intensive watering a new specimen requires during its first growing season

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SAVINGS \$100 to \$200 for each new metered shrub you don't have to buy

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23 Skip extended warranties. They can hedge against the cost of replacing everything from LCD TVs to lawnmowers. But odds are that you'll never make a claim.

COBT If something breaks, haggle with the manufacturer to get it fixed for free or paying for repairs out of your own pocket.

SAVINGS \$50 to \$200 per warranty if you don't buy.

BONUS Not getting snagged by the fine print. Warranties may exclude your particular problem or contain a depreciation clause meaning the product's value goes down as it ages—and hence the payout shrinks.

24 Compare shop online for everything from light fixtures to fridges. Then ask your bookseller to match the lowest price you find.

COBT A few minutes surfing the Web plus some printer ink.

SAVINGS \$200 to \$1,000 on a new French door-style fridge.

BONUS After the customer service free govt gift online, and so on.

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26 Get gently used tools, electronics, and furniture from Freecycle.org, an online community of folks who swap what they no longer need for stuff they can't do without.

COBT Your fellow Freecyclers expect your donate items don't just take freecycle.

SAVINGS \$75 or more for a new-to-you wireless router for your computer.

27 Buy a new router for your computer.

COBT Your fellow Freecyclers expect your donate items don't just take freecycle.

SAVINGS \$75 or more for a new-to-you wireless router for your computer.

28 Comb through your computer's hard

COBT Your fellow Freecyclers expect your donate items don't just take freecycle.

SAVINGS \$75 or more for a new-to-you wireless router for your computer.

29 Plug in a SmartStrip

COBT Your fellow Freecyclers expect your donate items don't just take freecycle.

SAVINGS \$75 or more for a new-to-you wireless router for your computer.

30 Raise the deductible

COBT Your fellow Freecyclers expect your donate items don't just take freecycle.

SAVINGS \$200 or more per year or

31 Times the extra fridge.

COBT Your fellow Freecyclers expect your donate items don't just take freecycle.

SAVINGS \$200 or more per year or

32 Install a shower timer in the kids' bathroom.

COBT Your fellow Freecyclers expect your donate items don't just take freecycle.

SAVINGS \$200 or more per year or

33 Times the extra fridge.

COBT Your fellow Freecyclers expect your donate items don't just take freecycle.

SAVINGS \$200 or more per year or

34 Times the extra fridge.

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36 Times the extra fridge.

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SAVINGS \$200 or more per year or

37 Times the extra fridge.

COBT Your fellow Freecyclers expect your donate items don't just take freecycle.

SAVINGS \$200 or more per year or



morning routines uses the struggle to ensure they (a) eat breakfast, (b) brush their teeth and (c) make it to the bus or train.

33 Do you own a smart meter? Pick up Black & Decker's new Thermal Link Detector to find weak spots in your home's "insulation envelope." It uses an infrared lamp to detect heat leaks. **SAVINGS \$100** or more per year in energy costs.

34 Schedule a furnace or boiler tune-up every year to boost its efficiency. **COST \$100 to \$150.** **SAVINGS \$200** per year in energy costs. **BONUS** Tune-ups remove scale and corrosion, preventing repairs and extending the life of your heating plant.

35 Get the contractor discount on home improvement products. Bring local dealers offers of 10, 20 or even 35 percent discount to tradespeople. So, for example, ask the name of your plumber when buying new bath fixtures. Don't have a pro? Explain that you're contracting the job and ask if they'll extend the discount. **COST** Occasionally you may have to do a lot of sweet talking. **SAVINGS** Easily \$250 for new tub, sink and toilet suite.

BONUS Once you get in the seller's computer, you'll usually recover the discount, too, by not having to bargain.

Save up to \$500

36 Cancel your phone line and replace it with a magic link. A tiny gadget you insert into your computer's USB port, instantly transforming the broadband access you're already paying for into free phone service at blackanddecker.com (available in March). **SAVINGS \$100** or more per year in energy costs. **BONUS** In addition to lower bills, you'll have more time to make your house more comfortable year-round.

37 Start watering, once a month, or other ornamental landscape plants from cuttings of a freely member or neighbor's plant (with permission of course). **COST \$10** for watering hose and potting soil at the local nursery plus a few years of patience as the plant multiplies. **SAVINGS \$300** or more for a nursery's growth. **BONUS** You can carry on a family tradition by gifting an offspring of your grandfather's prize rosebush in your own backyard.

38 Install no under-sink water filter, and stop buying expensive bottled water. **COST \$50** for the DIY HomeLink Single Under-sink

Drinking Water System or even.com. **SAVINGS \$340** per year on purified water.

BONUS Reducing the environmental impact caused by the manufacture and disposal of plastic bottles—as well as shipping them to your home from far-flung places like Fiji.

39 Install a wireless light switch. Simply attach a battery-operated device to the wall and connect it to a switch in the lamp socket, which then controls the bulb. **COST \$27** for the Carlini Wireless Light Switch Switch that smart home use only. **SAVINGS \$250 to \$300** by having an electrician install a switch and wires in wiring. **BONUS** You won't need to patch or paint any holes in the walls.

40 Appeal your property tax assessment yourself. One in three homeowners who do so are successful in getting their fees reduced, according to the National Taxpayers Union. **COST \$2** for Ask for the Right Property Taxes brochure at ntu.org. **SAVINGS** As much as \$400 per year off your tax bill.

BONUS The tax reduction will last for many years to come.

41 Work with a designer—lighting, kitchen, bathroom, or interior— from the retailer where you intend to buy your products. Bring items such as Elvish tiles or the same for free, while others rebate the price free again of your purchase. **COST** None. **SAVINGS** About \$300 per hour that you would otherwise pay for a consultation with an

independent designer. **BONUS** There is a store where you can find products well used and know what it took to get there.

42 Get free mulch and compost of your lawn's yard waste recycling center. **COST \$10** for pickup and pickup. **SAVINGS \$300** for all the amendments you'll need to fertilize and cover your most beds and landscape plantings, per a score. **BONUS** You'll reduce the amount of waste that ends up in the landfill, and the mulch from leaves collected by your neighbors and the mulch from trees that grow in the yard will have a low risk of introducing non-native pests or weeds.

43 Cancel your trash pickup service if you currently pay a private company to cart away your refuse. Bring it to the dump yourself. **COST** A few hours of your year. **SAVINGS** As much as \$450 per year for the garbage man. **BONUS** There's no better place to learn the latest go-to.

44 Lock in a price cap for your heating oil or natural gas when prices are low to protect yourself from rate hikes over the coming months. Check prices at your supplier's website. **COST** Some utility companies charge a stock in fee. **SAVINGS \$500** or more on energy costs—if prices climb significantly.

BONUS Because you're taking a cap and not paying a fee, you won't lose out if prices drop as they did last fall.

45 Replace worn-out air conditioning equipment (or install energy-efficient windows when HVAC gets old).



off-the-shelf projects

48

Choose in-stock materials, including tile, wood flooring, entry doors, or cabinets, when remodeling. It takes less time to supply these materials, but that could mean you'll pay more for the same quality as special-order items. **COST** Fewer delays, but that could mean you'll pay more for the same quality as special-order items. **SAVINGS \$200** or more on labor improvement time. **BONUS** Not having to wait three weeks for the product to arrive.



46 Get a free tree. Many municipalities gladly provide and plant ornamental trees at the sidewalk space between the sidewalk in front of your house and the street. **COST** Just a phone call to your town's public works department. **SAVINGS \$300** you don't have to pay for the tree and a professional landscaper to plant it for you. **BONUS** You get free advice from an arborist on which flowering trees will thrive best along your property's border, given such factors as sidewalk, power lines and snowplows.

47 Pay your January mortgage bill in December to take the interest and property tax deductions in the current tax year. **COST** Paying up cash flow to meet your check early (Make sure the bank processes before the end of December). **SAVINGS** About \$500 on taxes. **BONUS** Lowering your taxable income may qualify you for child tax credits. With

49 Pay your property taxes yourself instead of having your mortgage lender do it. If you have good credit, ask your lender if you can set up your own escrow account in an FDC insured savings account, such as those at savings.com. These earn around 3 percent interest. **COST** None. **SAVINGS** A check for \$500 or more from the mortgage company, which is probably holding two months' worth of tax payment escrow—plus you'll remember interest in your own escrow account than what your lender credits you. **BONUS** Paying your taxes every six months (or every three, depending on the town) instead of with your monthly mortgage gives you more cash flow flexibility.

50 Buy a new furnace or water heater. The 2008 federal economic boost package includes tax credits for energy-saving appliances made in 2009. **SAVINGS** Between \$500 and \$3,000 on boiler installation, heavily offset by the money you'll save in fuel. **SAVINGS** As much as \$500 in federal dollars, which come right off your tax bill. **BONUS** You may also qualify for state credits as well as rebates from your local utility company. Find out at china.gov.

b	e	h	i	n	d		
		c	l	o	s	e	d
d	o	o	r	s			

[illegible]

Stomach
The stomach is a pear-shaped organ that
digests food in the body. It has a thick
muscular wall, and it is divided into two
parts: the upper part, called the fundus, and
the lower part, called the pylorus. The
stomach is located in the upper left
part of the abdomen, just below the
diaphragm. It is about 10-12 inches
long and 4-6 inches wide. The stomach
is covered by a layer of peritoneum, which
is a thin, slippery membrane that
allows the stomach to move around
freely. The stomach is connected to the
esophagus at the top and to the small
intestine at the bottom. The stomach
has a capacity of about 1-2 liters of
food. It takes about 4-6 hours for food
to pass through the stomach. The
stomach produces gastric juice, which
contains hydrochloric acid and pepsin,
which help to break down food into
smaller pieces that can be absorbed by
the small intestine. The stomach also
absorbs some water and simple
sugars. The stomach is a very important
organ in the digestive system.



Flamboyant silver: PROJECTS This 2004 example at the Renaissance Revival style—a North-western on Italian farmhouse, from the 18th and 19th centuries—is a bit of the chocolate-colored Renaissance Revival style (the lower level) that gave New York City rowhouses their familiar nickname. The homeowners hope to strip the exterior to reveal the stone.

Decorative Hinges
 During the period a emphasis on highly stylized woodwork and metalwork was in demand for the perfect hardware to complement it. Early brass bolted hinges such as these were extremely popular in the late 1800s. Stamped metal hinges in the factories of the American industrial era.



Fit for a family
LARRY OLSZEWSKI'S Green Shirts and Kids
Outlets and Kids Bowl Boys assemble
as they strap a feature that is New
York New York City neighborhood

is a black, dead-end identical road, the former building house that Karen Stern and Kacey Corvella had come to barely stand out. Inspired, even and highly worn condition were typical for the Brooklyn, New York, neighborhood of Prospect Heights. But as soon as the couple stepped inside, they knew they'd found a gem. There was the original woodwork (stains—only arched, classical columns, but very simple and elegant), and a hint of a new floor (wood). "We did have to fix the house," says Karen. "All because of these details."

New York has some of the best urban residents of architecture: the country, particularly in the many areas still populated with houses as late as Kern and Korn's. Which is one reason The Old House TV chose the city for its next project location. The FOW crew, working with local resident Michael R. Stancovici, is remodeling the couple's 1904 Renaissance Revival farmhouse, helping them turn it into two apartments while retaining its exterior and preserving the antique details.

The late Vietnamese house-plant is the byproduct of the circumstantial urban situation, where elaborate woodwork carried by machine was shipped at bulk around the country. "Most problems brought previously expensive materials to the middle class," says Charles Lockwood, architectural historian and author of *Bangkok and Beyond: The New Old Townships 1783-1928*. "Suddenly, everyone could have a fancy house." Over the years, many sites for houses were plotted and converted into separate apartment blocks—but not this one. Its details as a low-cost housing have not kept the woodwork away from renovation's watchful gaze.

The couple plans to live with their three young boys on the first and second floors and part of the garden-level floor. The rest of the garden-level and the third floor will be separate rental apartments. But before they get started, come on in and check out the house that drew them—and *The Old House*—to this architectural treasure trove.



READY-MADE MILLWORK

The first woodwork catalogs came out in the 1870s, and by the 1890s they offered hundreds of pages of architectural elements and trimwork, which developers turned to decorate the houses they built. "Advertisers would mention the fact that these houses had elaborate details," says architectural historian Charles Lockwood. "It was a big selling point." The oak veneering, doors, and columns—seen here, as well as the triangular spandrel connecting the arches—were likely ordered from one such catalog.



1 Fluted pilasters

The late 19th-century industrial revolution made mass-produced architectural details—like this oak network that clades rooms on the porch floor—affordable to the middle class, and allowing no ornate style for the entire Victorian era. "A lot of people think the elaborate woodwork in these houses was all handmade by popular craftsmen," says Lockwood. "The truth is that long before the 1890s most of this stuff was factory-made."

2 Handcrafted joinery

While most of the house's details were machine-made, some more refined elements were still crafted by hand, such as this decorative scrollwork having offset to one of the fireplace mantels. Many woodworkers continued to employ European craftsmen who were flooding the country in large numbers of immigrants to add handmade touches to their products.

3 Intricate carvings
Factories used mechanical cutting to create standardly designed brackets, bases, and other house parts like door knobs, window hardware, and vent covers. This vent brought warmth to the first floor from the house's original coalfireplace, but from within the house it is operated by the simple principle of hot air rises," says F&B plumbing and heating expert Richard Sullivan.

4 Entry-hall storage
Built-in closets like this were common in the late 19th century. The beautiful built-in bench was not just eye-catching; they were also practical, served as a spot where one could store coats, hats, and umbrellas, and provided a place to sit. The bench also served as a make-up area and hallway space saver.



"What got me excited about working on this house was all the pristine trim and built-ins. The place had been operating as a boarding house for more than 60 years, but nobody ever came along and painted over the woodwork."

—ADAM KAMERHART/TOITV



BUILT-IN STORAGE

Marry New York City rowhouses had round and hex beds rooms on the second floor with small, well appointed his-and-hers closets between them. They boasted ample storage space and movable washroom sinks. This one, enclosed by pocket doors, is decked out in bird's-eye maple cabinetry.



Classical details, like this column on the vestibule's narrowed, were designed to meet the sampled format. "This is actually a very modest house compared to other brownstones that were being built back then," says Lockwood of the 704-project house. "Millers like that was quite common."



5. Space-saving strategy
The city's stair placement was intended to give the viewer as much square footage as possible. Stained glass skylights, located directly above, illuminated most staircases.



Rise-up! revolution
The end of the 19th century saw a revolution from within: fireplace mantels to elaborate mirrored mantels made wheed. But the real change is that surrounds the core burning fireplace were there before, and is important. "The use of popular because the safety was also improved especially in cities," says David Hull, founder of most historical which sells reproduction mantels and mirrors. "The manufacturers knew this, and they started putting their products on a national basis after the other nations to show or bring."



Extended wear
Near the end of the Victorian period, silversmiths enthusiastically started incorporating more square-shaped elements—a precursor of the Draftsmen style. While this trend was factory-made and derived from a catalog, the Braid carrying ours likely done by hand. ■



celato bonus

While the webinars at SmallBusiness.com/Info are what TDH media organizer Tom McCormack and Scott O'Connor set up for the "Locality" project, SmallBusiness.com/Info has another product that makes great details about the story of SmallBusiness.com/Info.

ALL
ABOUT

Engineered wood floors

It's a dead ringer for solid wood, faster to install, and less prone to moisture damage. Our experts help you decide which high-tech, low-bass boards are best for your application and style. **By Sid Vukobrat**

Take a close look at the wood floor in the photo on the right. A less-eyé might conclude that this rich expanse is made up of solid strips of red oak, one of the most popular American hardwoods. That eye would be wrong, mostly. Sure, it's oak on top, but that's just a wood veneer skin. Underneath are more than wood layers, all glued together to make a plywood sandwich called engineered flooring.

Since their invention in the 1960s, engineered wood floors have improved in appearance and performance, accounting for 30 percent of all the wood flooring sold in America today. Available in dozens of wood species, and with new surface effects, such as hand scraping, for a canevas or patina, these high-tech boards now look just right in any vintage house, whether it's a 1910 bungalow or a '70s soul ranch.

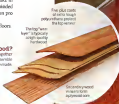
Most boards come with a factory finish that'll not let one applied in your home on solid wood, and they'll be ready for footprints the day you put them down. Engineered boards are also problem solvers, allowing you to use them where solid strips often can't go, like in basements or directly over concrete slabs. Even loose, beveled-edged bamboo woods can lay the boards themselves, saving a handy in pro installation and getting great-looking results in a weekend.

Read on to learn everything there is to know about engineered floors.

What is engineered wood?

A skeleton of wood veneers glues together like plywood and is filled with strips that resemble solid boards. How they're made.

By design: The veneers in multi-layers come at 90 degrees to the grain.



The glue coats all sides; tough polyurethane protects the top veneer.

The top veneer layer is typically 1/8 inch thick.

The core is made of strips of wood, typically 1/2 inch thick, glued together at 90 degrees to the grain.



VITALS

Is it right for you?

Off-handly, installation: Most homeowners prefer the selection of wood species and surface treatments. Subtle facelifts, where solid wood often isn't.

What's it cost?

About 20 percent more than unfinished solid boards, but you might find cost and then turn on installation, staining, and sealing. Figure \$3 to \$4 per square foot.



Does it hold up?

Warranties on the floor range from 10 to 30 years under "normal wear." That means no or few dogs per household, not 10. Most companies provide lifetime warranties against wear, discoloration.



How to care for it?

Keep with a microfiber cloth and wood floor cleaner to remove the dirt that collects in the finish and abrades the floor's life.

Side by side, the top veneer is 1/8 inch thick, and the core is 1/2 inch thick. The glue coats all sides; tough polyurethane protects the top veneer.

Where to install it

Engineered flooring goes anywhere you'd put solid wood—and some places you couldn't

•In Basements The moisture that gathers there works havoc on solid wood flooring. Because the veneer layers used for engineered boards cross-grain like plywood, the wood's natural tendency to expand and contract in humid areas is reduced. The boards' thinner profile also helps where headroom is at a premium.

•During Remodels The range of thickness options, starting as low as 1/4 inch, allow you to finesse transitions between different types of flooring at doorways and stairways that would be awkward or impossible with standard 3/4-inch solid flooring. You can also lay engineered flooring over any flat, stable surface, including concrete tile, sheet vinyl, and existing wood floors.

•Over Radiant Heat Thinner engineered boards transfer heat better than thick solid wood and are more stable. Flooring floors are best because they don't need staples or nails that might puncture wires or hot-water tubes. Check with the radiant system's manufacturer before using a foam underlayment, which interferes with heat flow.

Where not to use it While engineered flooring handles swings in moisture better than solid flooring, it has limitations. The wet feet, drips, and soggy towels of a busy bathroom, mixed with steam from a shower, put even stable engineered boards at risk. The same threat hangs over laundry rooms.

Why hardness matters

The harder the top layer, the more resistant it is to dents and the longer it'll keep its like-new looks. But hardness isn't the only factor to consider. Denser woods with slow grain, like maple, show dents more readily than slightly softer wood with a bold grain, like red oak. And floors with lighter tones are better at hiding scratches and wear. The chart below compares the hardness of popular wood species.



It's a lot easier to install engineered flooring—and the price is better, too. (Clockwise from top left) Photo by iStockphoto.com



pro advice

GET SOME FLOORING CONSTRUCTION "In areas like a kitchen, where you'll be standing a lot, consider a floating floor with a foam underlayment. It'll offer more cushioning underfoot than a fastened or glued-down one."

Pick your board

There are colors, textures, and strip widths to please every taste. Here's a sampling of the latest looks.

Maple

Price: \$10.75 per sq. ft.
Moisture: Moderate
Highlight: Install it any old-fashioned way. Redwood shims, glued down, or glued together.

Heart pine

Price: \$10.10 per sq. ft.
Moisture: Moderate
Highlight: Brins, planks, and nail holes give this mottled old-growth wood a rich, rustic look.

Spanish cherry

Price: \$13.50 per sq. ft.
Moisture: Good
Highlight: FSC-certified tropical hardwood, it has a rich, dark, and aged look.

Red oak

Price: \$9 per sq. ft.
Moisture: Average
Highlight: A fine wood, it has a "broken" effect reminiscent of weathered barn boards.

American cherry

Price: \$11.50 per sq. ft.
Moisture: Good
Highlight: Comes unfinished. Once stained and sealed, it looks like solid wood.

Hickory

Price: \$8 per sq. ft.
Moisture: Moderate
Highlight: Moisture-resistant, it's a good choice for areas where no VOC finish products are allowed.

White oak

Price: \$6.50 per sq. ft.
Moisture: Moderate
Highlight: Works with the natural wood grain, creating a subtle, textured surface.

White ash

Price: \$12.25 per sq. ft.
Moisture: Moderate
Highlight: A hard, compact, smooth surface, it's a good choice for areas where no VOC finish products are allowed.

Bamboo

Price: \$1.50 per sq. ft.
Moisture: Low
Highlight: A fresh, contemporary look and a quick click, no glue, no nail installation.

White oak

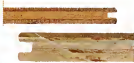
Price: \$21–\$23 per sq. ft.
Moisture: Moderate
Highlight: The rough, and heavily worn, look of the floor adds rustic charm from a weathered barn.

Good, better, best

Engineered floor planks range from the lowest, starting at \$3 per square foot, to the high, at \$14 and more. To judge quality, check the thickness of the "wear layer" or top skin of wood, the number of veneers in the core, and the number of finish coats—all of which affect price and warranty. Typically, the more layers, the better. Below, see how the three common classes of engineered boards stack up.



- +3 ply construction
- +1-3 mm wear layer
- +5 finish coats
- +10- to 15 year warranty
- +1/8-inch thick
- +\$3-35 per sq ft
- +Options limited to common species, such as oak or ash, and just a few stains.



- +5 ply
- +2-3 mm wear layer
- +7 finish coats
- +15- to 20 year warranty
- +1/8-inch thick
- +\$5-80 per sq ft
- +Other species, such as cherry, hick, and maple, are also available, and the surface effects, such as distressing.



- +7-ply or more
- +3 mm plus wear layer, which can be sanded two or more times
- +5 finish coats
- +25 year plus warranty
- +1/4 to 1/2 inch thick
- +\$10-34 per sq ft
- +Wider selection of species, including options and more surface treatments, such as hand-sanded and wire-brushed.



Can engineered floors be refinished?

Yes, they can, at least once. Floors with a wear layer less than 2 millimeters thick can tolerate a light scuff sanding, with a buffer. Thicker top layers can be sanded just like solid wood, allowing you to restore deeper scratches and dents. An engineered floor with a 3 millimeter top, for instance, can handle two refinishing jobs. Just be sure your flooring pro knows your floor's specs and refinishes history before he begins.



HOW ENGINEERED WOOD SAVES TREES

All engineered flooring is somewhat eco-friendly because it makes efficient use of the tree. For instance, if you factor just the top layer of wood that you see, a 3-inch-wide by 2-foot-long solid board covers about half a square foot. The same board sliced into the thinner veneers for engineered strips can cover 12 square feet. The secondary veneer layers under with are usually made with more plentiful lower-quality wood that might otherwise be wasted. Here are three types of engineered boards that prove for your floors—evermore.

Reclaimed When flooring lumber is salvaged from old buildings, fewer trees need to be harvested from forests. And because the wood comes from old trees that grew very slowly, it's much harder and heavier than today's softwood plywood.

Certified Floors stamped with the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) logo means that all the wood used to create the board comes from sustainably managed forests. That's of particular concern when buying exotic species from abroad, where logging practices may be rather lax.

Formaldehyde-free Durable, water-resistant engineered flooring need not offend eco-friendly formaldehyde-averse consumers. These boards use specially created, water-based resins, which also lessens moisture exposure to toxic off-gassing chemicals.

COURTESY OF THE FSC, FSC® CERTIFIED, SEE US AT BOOTH 1000, GREEN BUILDING 1000

Pick your pattern

Your floor doesn't have to go in straight lines. Here are four new ways to add interest to your interiors with engineered boards.



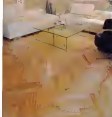
+ tiles

These 9-inch squares offer a modern twist on traditional parquet. Shaded species for a checkerboard effect. \$20 per sq ft. www.sawdust.com



pro advice

THE SUELA FISHBURN CONTRACTOR
"When laying a floor, orient boards to the longest wall. This creates an optical illusion, making the room appear larger than it really is."



+ chevronbone
Specially milled short and narrow lengths build a chevron. Chevron pattern are reminiscent of floors in Art Deco-style homes. Mix up. \$9.50 per sq ft. millingfloors.com



+ borders
Engineered decorative inlays highlight the perimeter of a room. Starting at \$12 per linear foot. duboisdecor.com



+ random width
Some makers bundle boards of varying widths in the same box, but you can also mix and match yourself. Just buy different sizes in the same finish and meet anywhere \$12 per sq ft. barnwood.com

Four ways to DIY

Engineered flooring can be fastened or glued down, or left to "float," relying on its mass to hold it in place. Use this guide to choose the install method that's best for you.



Watch it, learn it, do it

Step-by-step self-installation guides are available on the website.

1. Glue it together. Apply a bead of glue to the tongue of each board and tap it into place with a block (left). The floor floats and is held to the subfloor except by force of gravity.

2. Fasten it down. Rent a floor stapler and compressor (about \$40 per day) and rapidly secure the boards to the existing floor without having to nail up any glue.

3. Glue it down. Lay the boards in rows of adhesive, as you would tile. This approach works particularly well over curved concrete, where you can't use staples.

4. Click and lock. This floating floor has specially milled top and bottom grooves that lock together without glue or fasteners. It's the quickest and cleanest installation method.



Instant character, right out of the box

Floors with these factory-made patinas have a vintage look that masks dents and chips.

Hand-scraped Wearers are prone to show random ripples into smooth grooves, approximating the appearance of hand-scraped wood. Look for natural variations in color.

Distressed Mechanical drums fitted with belts, ruts, and wires roll over a board and crash the wood grain, imparting time-worn feel. Some makers even add rectangular "dimple" guides, mimicking an old floor that's been repaired.

Wire-brushed Rotating steel brushes remove the softer wood from the surface, highlighting the grain. Wear isn't much dirtier in these recesses, so use a vacuum instead. Just turn off its rotating beater bar.

THE COMPETITION

We sort the difference between engineered laminate and solid boards.



Laminate

It may look real, but that's actually a photo of wood you're standing on. As paper images imbedded in a plastic film, the boards are coated with a protective film. A surface-embedding material would be better. Laminate flooring is also as thick as engineered, so you can lay it over existing floors, but once made a top coat wears away, it's tough to refinish without sanding.

Solid wood

Given boards start with a tongue on one edge and a groove on the other. Because the boards expand and contract, enough they must be fastened to the subfloor and can't be laid directly over concrete. Like engineered and laminate, a 1/2-inch-thick wood strip can be refinished up to 30 times, compared with three for the best engineered and some laminate.

Match the floor to your style

With a wide-ranging palette of looks and textures to choose from, engineered wood floors can suit a rustic country retreat, contemporary urban loft, and everything in between.



traditional elegance

Wide plank pine with a hand-scraped surface adds this formal farmhouse floor. Released of fresh maple knots and wormholes, aged Rouseau finish. \$9.50 per sq. ft. (includes professional install).



modern finish

Teak veneer, such as this red oak, looks contemporary with dark stain and wide top coat, both of which are applied in the factory. These finish. \$10.25 per sq. ft. (includes install).



casual patina

Naturally worn, rich heart pine gives this with the rounded forms. Inlay between. This unfinished wood darkens over time. Glossy Lin. \$10.50 per sq. ft. By special order, laminate liquidators.



crisp and clean

The combination of white oak veneer and white painted white cabinets brightens this vintage look. Glossy Lin. \$10.50 per sq. ft. (includes install).

Cost calculator

To find out how much a new engineered wood floor will set you back, first measure the room's square footage. Add 15 percent for cuts and waste, then multiply by the board's square-foot price. Don't forget to add a 5 percent markup for labor fees, which are sold separately.

$$\left(\text{SQUARE FOOTAGE} + \frac{15\% \text{ OF SQUARE FOOTAGE}}{\text{WASTE}} \right) \times \frac{\text{PRICE PER SQUARE FOOT}}{\text{COST}} = \text{COST}$$

→ Our cast of vet-as-it-gets

TOM SILVA
GreenSourceNORM ABRAM
Master CarpenterRICHARD TRETHEWEY
Plumbing Engineering ExpertKEVIN EGAN
PestNOLAN RYAN
Lockbox Contributor

Several of the balusters on my stairs are loose. How can I tighten them up?

—BETH HAZLEY/MARYLEND, CO.



Before using the end of a baluster, it's a pleasure to contribute to the underside of the handrail.

Tom Silva replies: Most loose balusters can be fixed by securing them to the handrail. You could simply dip a wood dowel in glue and wedge it between the top of the baluster and the underside of the handrail. When the glue dries, run away like scared.

Or you could drive a finish nail up through the baluster and into the handrail. (Always drill a pilot hole first to avoid splitting the thin piece of wood.) Then, using a can lid, carefully tap the nailhead below the surface and conceal it with putty.

FROSTY ROOF NAILS

The first couple of times that I've been in my attic when the temperature is really cold, I've noticed ice in the rafters sticking through the roof sheathing. Do you know why? Is there anything I should do about it?

—SEAN BREWER WOOD-BRIDGE, N.J.

Tom Silva replies: What's happening is that warm, moist air from inside your house is seeping into the attic and the moisture is condensing and freezing on the cold steel. And yes, you should do something to stop the seepage because it can reduce the effectiveness of your insulation and encourage mold growth.

There are three ways to solving this problem. First, seal all of the openings for air to leak into the attic. Maybe a bathroom fan isn't sealing outside

as the pull-down attic stairway tends to be chattering or the light fixture boxes aren't sealed. A home-energy specialist with a thermographic imaging device can pinpoint many small leaks you can't find.

Second, try reducing moisture levels in the house by turning on a exhaust fan when bathing and vent fans when cooking.

Third, make sure the attic is well ventilated so that any moisture that gets past your defenses has a way to escape. Soft and ridge vents are more effective than soffit vents, and they don't use any energy. If you already have these vents, make sure they aren't being blocked by insulation.

TOILET-VENT PROBLEM
The water in my toilet bowl keeps draining out on its own. What's going on?

—RON MELLIARKE, LITTLETON, COLO.

Richard Trethewey replies: When a toilet bowl can't hold water, the likely suspect is a clogged vent. Vents are pipes inside the walls of your house that connect to all the sinks, toilets, and tub drains and lead to the outside, usually through the roof. These pipes keep the air pressure in the drain system perfectly equalized so that when water can flow freely. If a vent is blocked, typically by debris falling inside it, water will either go down the drain slowly and noisily or be sucked out of the lowest fixture's trap. That's probably what's happening in your toilet.

The first thing to do is have a plumber clear the vent pipes by running snakes down the roofline. If that doesn't solve the problem, he might be able to install an air-admittance valve to supply additional air to the vent system. That valve, which can fit inside a vanity cabinet, draws air in from inside the house every time water goes down the drain. Then a

WHAT IS IT?



A Angle-roofing guide

B Corner trapezoid

C Rhombus or trapezoid

or

rectangle

rectangle



Norm Abram, Master Carpenter, is working on a chimney in a house in Maryland.

generally seals shut in block-chimney systems from cracking in the house.

FLOOR PROTECTION

We want to enlarge our living room doorway, but I'm worried about our hardwood floors. What's the best way to protect them from damage during the work?

—GEORGE BOSE, CHICAGO

Norm Abram replies: Heavy rolls of paper will trap debris, and it's a good idea to slip slippery thin plastic sheets that paper isn't much help if you drop a hammer or good plastic crumpled cardboard. That's why, when I'm working in my house, I cover my floors with the thick, interlocking foam-rubber tiles made for kids' playrooms. These 3/4-by-3/4-foot sheets are available from the home-center or online and can be assembled into almost any shape I need.

Compared with paper, they're a lot more comfortable to kneel on, too.

CHIMNEY FIRES

Our three-year-old chimney is cleaned twice a year, but we've already had a chimney fire this year. Is the chimney not being properly cleaned?

—NANCY ANDERSON, CHICAGO

Tom Silva replies: Chimney fires are fueled by highly flammable deposits of creosote that build up by being as water-soluble condensation on the sides of a cold flue. These fires are dangerous, they can burn hot enough to melt masonry flues, and increase the chance of a house catching on fire. Here are some things you can do to keep creosote in check.

• **Only burn wood that has been seasoned for at least 12 months.** It burns slower, and its dry smoke won't condense on the walls as readily as the smoke from green, unseasoned wood.

• **Maintain a good draft.** If smoke backs up into a room, it's probably beginning to cool in the flue. Talk to a

reason about ways to increase the flow of makeup air into the fireplace.

• **Install a damper** at the top of the chimney. These dampers, controlled by a cable that leads down to the fireplace, help the flue stop warm breezes from entering, reducing condensation problems.

Even if you're doing everything else right, creosote will build up if your chimney can't bring cleaned properly. So make sure your sweep is licensed, insured, and a member of a recognized trade association, such as the National Chimney Sweep Guild. Unaffiliated, fly-by-night sweeps do a better job of taking your chimney than keeping your fire clean.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

LEARNING CURVE

We've started to see signs of leaks in the ceiling directly below an open-sided cupola on our second story. The floor of the cupola is covered with boarding that's sealed with tar. Is there any way to stop the leaks?

—FRANK DOUGLASS, WINDYBROOK, IL

Tom Silva replies: First, you'll need to inspect the cupola's drains at scuppers to make sure they aren't clogged with debris. Also, check that the floor is pitched correctly so that water isn't puddling in corners. If the pitch is faulty, you should have a pro to tear off the tar, put down new sheathing, and cover it with a membrane roofing, such as EPDM, a type of synthetic rubber.

Even if the pitch is okay, you'll still need a roofer to get a new covering over the tar—that tar was only a temporary fix, at best. To stop the leaks permanently, you should use either an EPDM membrane or a roll-on elastomeric roof coating, such as Acryseal. Both products are flexible and waterproof, but they require a professional who will guarantee his work. We installed EPDM, and soon got a little leaky.

—MORGAN KAPLAN FOR A.O.

There's a 3-inch scorch mark on my wall-to-wall carpeting where an ember from the fireplace landed. How can I make it go away?

—GAIL LUNDGREN, DANBURY, CONN.

Tom Silva replies: Fortunately, you don't have to lay new carpet or encourage the furniture to cover scalded damage from beams, rail wires, stoves, and other blunders. For the price of a patch kit, some glue, and a few rollers—about \$30 total—you can make an invisible repair that will last the life of the carpet.

The basic kit, available at flooring dealerships and online, includes a hockey-puck-sized carpet roller and adhesive disks to glue the patch in place. The roller drives out the damaged section and an identically sized replacement patch. If you don't have any leftover scraps, harvest a patch from the back of a closet, beneath a radiator, or under furniture that's rarely moved. Patch repairs work best on plush, tufted pile with no pattern that repeats matching. Follow the steps on the next page, and you'll be close to an invisible fix in hours.

Cost: Carpet repair kit and roller: \$30; glue: \$20
Time: 30 minutes
Difficulty: Easy

STEP-BY-STEP Patch a carpet

1. Make an imprint.

Roll your hand over the largest burn marking the damaged section, and note which direction makes the carpet fibers stand up. Place the roller without blades over the damaged area and make three clockwise turns. Repeat twice a day for several days and expose the backing. Repeat these steps, including the rolling, in the area where you'll be exchanging the patch.



4. Stick the disk.

Remove the protective backing from the adhesive disk, and dampen the disk with cool water to temporarily sealize the glue. The disk's slight lip helps line the patch as you press the disk in the damaged area under the carpet between the backing and the padding, as shown. When the adhesive becomes tacky, in about 15 minutes, you'll have the carpet around the disk a edge.

2. Get the tool ready.

Screw on the roller blades so that they will slide through the backing when the roller is turned clockwise. Attach the pull screw if it should project back the roller as far as the blades do.



5. Install the patch.

Push out any loose carpet fibers around the edge of the hole and the surrounding carpet. Place a narrow bead of carpet seam glue along the perimeter of the cut out. Align the new patch with the direction of the fibers on the rest of the carpet, and stick the patch down firmly onto the disk. You have 15 minutes to make edge repairs before the glue sets.



6. Flatten the fibers.

Scrape the edge of the patch with a wire roller, and press down firmly so you don't bend around the perimeter of the patch. Next, push the roller over the patch from different angles until the fibers disappear. Let the adhesive cure for 24 hours before you walk on or wash the patch.

more how-to advice

Learn how to detect or patch floor tiles that buckle at thisoldhouse.com/best-2012



Norm's tricks of the trade

Q None of the stud finders I've tried seems to work on the plaster walls of my old house. What do you do?

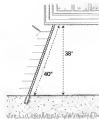
—KUC HENNINGSEN, NEW BEDFORD



A First, rough-sawed stud finders aren't designed to work on old plaster walls, and the wood isn't in an old plaster wall, but you can find them easily with a little less-tech detective work.

First look for signs of softness in the handboard tool when they go to

He didn't? Use a short bit to drill a small hole in an old house, place your probe through the hole with the drill running before. Once you know the distance between two studs, you can use a stud finder to find the rest of the wall.



Q How can I get my siding to come out easily spaced? I always seem to end up with uneven courses above or below the nail line.

—DOUGLAS ATLANTA

A First, choose the maximum exposure you want for your siding. For our purposes, let's say it's 4 inches. Measure vertically from the lower edge of the first course to the underside of the sill. If that distance is, say, 38 inches, then go to the next longest distance that's divisible by 4—in this case, 40 inches. Angle a tape measure along the wall, as it shows a hole, and the distance from the first course to the sill measures 40 inches. Now you kick off the 4-inch increments as the tape 4, 8, 12, etc. The vertical spacing between each mark will be exactly the same, and you didn't need any fancy math. This same trick lets you adjust courses of roofing shingles or divide a piece of plywood into an equal number of strips.

Q The screws holding my damaged mailbox to the post have rusted solid. How can I get them off?

—KENDALL ALPHEA, MOH

A Whenever I'm faced with a rusty screw and I can't find a way to remove it, I use a heat gun to heat the screw head and the surrounding area. The heat usually breaks the screw just enough to get it moving. If it's stuck in a hole, I use a heat gun to heat the hole. If you damage the hole, you have a hole to fill when removing the screw. Also, when you install your new mailbox, use a different kind of screws with a self-sealing head.



WHAT IS IT?



D: DETAIL SANDING PAD

The angled sides of the Zip Sander allow it to reach into tight corners, and the built-in foam brush keeps debris away from the sanding pad. Includes 10 sheets of 60-grit sandpaper. \$30, zip-sander.com

Mini drivers

Thanks to the power of lithium-ion batteries, there's a new breed of pistol grip screwdrivers that are as small and lightweight as dimmergers yet with features and performance to rival much larger tools. This Old House asked a team of readers to put four of the latest under 12-volt models to the test on small jobs around the house. Here are their verdicts.

READER TOOL TEST

RYOBI MODEL HP4ELK

Price: \$30

Highlights: Built-in LED check locks onto primary 2-inch screw bits.



Tester: Tedster, Tedster's Workshop (NJ)
Skill level: Seasoned
Offer: If we framed out my basement, did the electric (not installed a

sump pump, etc.).

Used tool for: Tightening kitchen cabinet door hinges.

Verdict: This tool is great for those times when a full-size driver is needed, but there just isn't room for a screwdriver.

Tool stats: 1.03 pounds, 4 volts, 12 position clutch, 1/4-inch hex bit chuck, 180 rpm, 45 in.-lbs. of torque.

Photo: Dan Felt



METABO POWERGRIP II

Price: \$330

Highlights: I use a right-angle attachment for tight spaces and a 1/4-inch hex bit chuck attachment for standard drill bits.



Tester: Jeff Coghill, Atlanta
Skill level: Seasoned
Offer: I've built two additions, built my house.

Used tool for: Driving screws.

Verdict: "I drive 125 drywall screws with constant power and never speed. I tell like it would easily handle twice as much work on the same charge."

Tool stats: 1.6 pounds, 72 volts, 20 position clutch, 1/4-inch hex bit chuck, 380 rpm, 142 in.-lbs. of torque.

SKIL MODEL 2362-01

Price: \$60

Highlights: Battery holds its charge for up to 18 months.



Tester: Jack McDermott, Leominster, Ohio
Skill level: Seasoned
Offer: I installed a 1/4-inch electrical engineer's

Used tool for: Making cabinets and installing window shades.

Verdict: "It would make an excellent addition to a toolbox. I'd used thirty-five 1/4-inch drivers from Skil with no luck in one charge."

Tool stats: 21 ounces, 72 volts, 18 position clutch, 1/4-inch hex bit chuck, 900 rpm, 90 in.-lbs. of torque.

Photo: Dan Felt

BLACK & DECKER MODEL LI4000

Price: \$36

Highlights: Magnified screw holder at backrest permits one-handed fastening.



Tester: Debra Taylor, Sand Springs, Okla.
Skill level: Average
Offer: I'm a stay-at-home mom who's used only hand tools around the house.

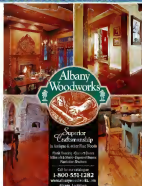
Used tool for: Filing the wood base on a fence.

Verdict: "The tool is comfortable to use, light and easy to grip. This makes a difference to me because I recently had shoulder surgery."

Tool stats: 14.5 ounces, 36 volts, 6 position clutch, 1/4-inch hex bit chuck, 380 rpm, 70 in.-lbs. of torque.

Photo: Dan Felt

Tool stats: 1.6 pounds, 72 volts, 20 position clutch, 1/4-inch hex bit chuck, 380 rpm, 142 in.-lbs. of torque.



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Discover "The amazing truth!" concerning the SUNHEAT infrared-electronic heating system's energy benefits. To inform you on the SUNHEAT zone concept, we would like to share some background information with you. The SUNHEAT is scientifically efficient due to its use of the specially developed solid infrared heat chambers. Each chamber utilizes three unique metal copper heat exchangers. Over 25 years of research and field-testing stand behind infrared heat as residential and commercial applications worldwide.

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There is lower operating and maintenance costs than conventional heat systems and the SUNHEAT is virtually maintenance free. There is no movement (chugging) of filters or high prices for replacements since our zone heaters have a lifetime reusable filter. There are absolutely no burners to adjust or replace. Long-life industrial infrared commercial quartz tubes are replaced easily and inexpensively. A full three-year warranty, including the new construction quartz tubes, protects the consumer's investment. The SUNHEAT does not require laundry from the air! It actually helps maintain desirable humidity levels. Also, water does not condense within the structure as with conventional systems.

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The history: Informed 3900s, one of the trendiest restaurants of its day but this dining establishment disappeared in the Woodward Park renovation of Chicago. Earl Henkel Road (aka Earl E. Elcher) was celebrated for his innovative changes, which featured solo ensembles at the famed Art Institute of Chicago, and inspired by his travels along the shores of Lake Michigan. Together with his wife Corine, he introduced two sons: Earl Jr. and Collins Earl. In the early 1930s, the house was sold to a brother who lived there until the 1940s when it was acquired by a Lutheran church that

Wife saved? The 4,000-square-foot four-bedroom house is a fine example of the Black Western style with decorative brasses, a hand-carved walnut on the first-floor gable, painted wood shingles, and massive elongated metal brackets. Inside there are some beautifully preserved oak floors, as well as pine mantels and moldings.

What's needed: The church recently sold the house to a long-term caretaker that wants to build apartments on the land and is offering it for a buck. To anyone willing to move it. Aside from some cosmetic work the house needs updated plumbing and electrical systems. Don't that do the new owner can't shut down some East Howell Road streets, which sell for about \$250 to hang above those newly erected streets. <http://bit.ly/18W6000>

[illegible]

Victorian
for
**ONE
BUCK!**



2. The house has a steeply pitched roof with wide overhanging eaves and a well-shaded front porch. 3. One of the house's most notable details is the way it features style shingles. 4. West of the front door and window casings are joined by corner brackets decorated with carvings. 5. To protect entrance windows, this triangular batten door located at a high floor level, marks the peak of the house's roofline. 6. An ending by Karl Hessel Reed who had the house built in the 1930s.



Got a house? If you know of an old house that should be saved and restored, write to The Old House LBS, 100 Wall Street, New York, NY 10038 or 1-800-368-5888 or www.ohl.org.



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